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Monday 7 December 2015

Lundi 7 décembre 2015



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
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Greffière
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 7 December 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 7 décembre 2015

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Michael Gravelle: As I think the members know, we have a very strong contingent here from Unifor today. We welcome them all, but I'm very pleased to particularly introduce two leading members of the executive from Thunder Bay: first of all, Kari Jefford, president of Unifor Local 229, and Suzanne Pulice, vice-president of Unifor Local 229. Kari and Suzanne, welcome.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I would like to introduce a special guest here today at Queen's Park. Alexandra Kotyk is the project manager of Lifeline Syria. Lifeline Syria's plan is to recruit, train and assist sponsor groups to welcome and support 1,000 Syrian refugees coming to Canada as permanent residents to resettle in the GTA over the next two years. I want to say welcome to Queen's Park today.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to welcome two friends from my neck of the woods, Windsor and Essex county: Ericka Deslippe and Wayne Maclean are activists with Unifor, and they are here for the Unifor lobby day. I want to welcome them to Queen's Park.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Please help me to welcome the grade 10 students from St. Augustine Catholic High School in the great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Michael Dingwall's Canadian and World Studies class from Humberside Collegiate is coming in. I wanted to mention that Jonathan Hampton is part of that class. Jonathan is the son of Shelley Martel, who was the MPP for Nickel Belt, as well as of our former leader Howard Hampton. Welcome, Jonathan.

Mr. John Vanthof: One of our page captains today is Keana Cavero. Her mother, Yanet Cavero, is in the gallery this morning. I'd like to welcome her to Queen's Park.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MINISTRY GRANTS

Mr. Patrick Brown: To the Acting Premier: This government has handed out \$1.4 billion from the Ministry of Economic Development, 80% of which went

to companies that either didn't apply or were told that the application was simply a formality. That's \$1.1 billion handed out to Liberal friends. What happened to the government that rode in on a white horse promising openness and transparency?

Does the Acting Premier believe it's acceptable to hand out a billion dollars without an application process? Simple question: Is that acceptable, yes or no?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I know the minister will want to take supplementary questions, but I do want to say thank you to the Auditor General for her report. It's a very important part of our democratic institution that we have the Auditor General give us advice on what we need to do to make government better for the people of this province.

I was very pleased that the Auditor General herself noted the actions we've taken on our follow-up audit. She said that she's "pleased to report that 76% of these actions have either been fully implemented or were in the process of being implemented." She went on to say, "I want especially to note the exemplary performance of the Ministry of Education, Ontario Power Generation, ServiceOntario and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in implementing recommendations from our audits two years ago."

I look forward to the supplementary. We take this seriously.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Acting Premier: This government will not ask for receipts. First, it was millions of dollars to teachers' unions. Next, it's bailing out private companies for snowplows. Now we find out that after handing out billions of dollars in the name of economic development, this government can't prove they've created a single job. This government can't prove a single dollar of return on their investments. They can't prove it because they never studied the economic impact. All the minister does is write a cheque, stage a photo op, then forgets the company exists until the next time he needs to send out a press release.

Why can't the Liberals prove one job was ever created? Was it because this was simply an opportunity to hand out cheques to their friends?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I've got—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, the sultan of slush.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Pardon me?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not helpful. *Interjection.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister.

Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to share two numbers with the Leader of the Opposition: 145,000 jobs created or retained in this province since 2004—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville.

Hon. Brad Duguid: —145,000 Ontarians working today because we've had the courage to partner with our business sector; 145,000 jobs that, if you and your party had your way—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm not going to allow shouting matches to go back and forth, and the member from Leeds–Grenville, in case he didn't hear me, I asked him to come to order because he was continuing to shout. I hope the minister gets the message, too.

Nice and easy.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I'm just responding.

The fact of the matter is we've had \$26 billion of private sector investment since 2004 that's flowed into this province, and the party opposite has opposed every one—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will take the exercise. The member from Leeds–Grenville, second time. The member from Dufferin–Caledon, come to order.

Finish, please.

Hon. Brad Duguid: We've had the courage to make these investments: 145,000 Ontarians' jobs retained or created in this province—jobs that that party would like to see in Mexico, would like to see in the Deep South, would like to—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's enough. The member from Leeds–Grenville is warned.

Final supplementary?

1040

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Acting Premier, or to the minister of handouts: The last time the Liberals got caught with a slush fund, it turned out that they were handing over cheques to companies run by lifelong Liberals and Liberal staffers.

Can the Acting Premier verify how many of these companies that received these grants donated to the Liberal Party? Or was there an expectation that they would donate after they received a grant? A very clear and direct question: Did any of the companies that received these grants also donate to the Liberal Party before or after?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Here are the jobs that that party and that leader are opposing:

—5,000 high-tech jobs within the next 10 years in the GTA through Cisco; you oppose that;

—4,000 jobs in Alliston for Honda retained; they oppose that;

—8,000 jobs in Guelph through Linamar; they oppose that;

—3,000 jobs in Oakville through Ford; they oppose that;

—7,500 jobs in Cambridge; they oppose that; and

—800 jobs in Nanawake through Goodyear; they oppose that.

We are partnering with businesses to grow this economy, an officially competitive global economy. We have the courage to make those investments. Clearly they don't. Some 145,000 Ontarians have had their jobs retained as a result of these investments. We're proud of these investments. We're going to continue to grow this economy, in spite of the opposition—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

MINISTRY GRANTS

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Acting Premier: Since the Minister of Economic Development will not answer whether there are donations to the Liberal Party after these grants, I'm going to try a different angle.

The Minister of Economic Development has doled out \$1.4 billion through grants to Ontario businesses. Last week, the Auditor General, to use her words, said that "the government gave most of the money to companies it had chosen with no public competition." She told us there were "no criteria" on how they were picked. That sounds an awful lot like the Colle-gate slush fund scandal that cost the member from Eglinton–Lawrence his cabinet job.

Mr. Speaker, is the Auditor General correct? Did the government give out grants with no criteria or competition? Is this Brad-gate?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, let me share with you some of the investments that we've made across this province, that the members opposite have actually taken an interest in, despite the fact that they and their leaders don't support them.

In Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, a regional economic development fund provided nearly \$2 million, leveraging \$15 million and creating or sustaining 400 jobs. The members of the party opposite talk about not supporting these funds, but when it comes to their own ridings, they're very supportive.

Perth–Wellington: I received a letter from that member requesting southwestern Ontario development support for a business in his riding. On November 7, 2012, the member for Simcoe–Grey wrote me, requesting funding for his riding through the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund. On October 22—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, come to order. The leader of the third party, come to order.

Finish, please.

Hon. Brad Duguid: The member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound wrote to me, asking for funding for a local airport through the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund. The member for Wellington–Halton Hills wrote me and said some very glowing things about the importance of this fund.

The fact of the matter is that you can't have it both—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Acting Premier and the minister of slush funds: This government picked companies to receive—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member knows, or should know, that that's not appropriate. Withdraw, please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish.

Mr. Patrick Brown: The government picked companies to receive grants—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. It goes both ways. I want attention for questions and answers.

Please finish.

Mr. Patrick Brown: This government picked companies to receive grants behind closed doors for the purpose of press-release politics. The Auditor General told us that 80% of investments were “made through unadvertised and non-transparent processes.” She told us that “only selected” companies “were invited to apply.” That sounds like the minister was just calling up his friends and making them an offer they couldn't refuse.

Mr. Speaker, can the Acting Premier explain why it's appropriate to hand out multi-million-dollar cheques with no competition? This wouldn't fly anywhere in Ontario; why does it fly with this government?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew, come to order—second time. I'm not standing up for you to get a cheap shot in when I get quiet. That's going to stop.

Minister.

Hon. Brad Duguid: The fact of the matter is that the process for consideration of the allocation of these funds is among the toughest processes anywhere in the world today. The fact of the matter is one out of 100 of the companies that have requested funding under these proposals actually get through the very tough criteria to get there.

Any company in this province, in this country, anywhere in the world globally, can simply go onto our website and contact our ministry to get into consideration of

these funds. So what the Leader of the Opposition is saying is unmitigated nonsense. These funds are open to any company to apply to, but we need to use these funds strategically to grow jobs, 145,000—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Final supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again, to the Acting Premier: I will trust the Auditor General's report, 10 times out of 10, over the spin of this Minister of Economic Development.

Within the \$1.4 billion given away by the ministry, there was a noticeable lack of funding for forestry and mining projects. If you actually want to engage in economic development, maybe you can do it in a part of the province that needs it. There was a noticeable lack of funding for northern Ontario. I guess the Premier or the minister didn't seem to want to invite northern companies to apply. The ministry hasn't funded a northern project for economic development through this fund since 2008.

Why did the government ignore northern Ontario? Was it because there were no Liberal-friendly companies in northern Ontario?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: We have a Northern Ontario Heritage Fund that continues to invest—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Simcoe–Grey will come to order, and the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

Finish, please.

Hon. Brad Duguid: —and that fund continues to make investments in the north.

Our northern members have done a tremendous job in supporting the north, but the fact of the matter is I asked the Leader of the Opposition to take a look at the members on his right, take a look at the members on his left, take a look around them; not one of those members supported the \$2.6 billion that we've invested to leverage \$26 billion of private sector investment and create or retain 145,000 jobs in this province.

That Leader of the Opposition has a tendency to change his mind from time to time. Are you with us in creating those 145,000 jobs or are you with your colleagues who have opposed our efforts to build this economy and create jobs every step of the way?

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Acting Premier. Can the Acting Premier tell Ontarians why she thinks Hydro One does not need public watchdogs?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I think we've had this debate in this House many times. What we are committed to is building the infrastructure that this province needs. If you talk to municipal leaders across the province, if

you talk to businesses across the province, if you talk to labour organizations whose members will be put to work because of these investments, you will all hear that we need to make the investments in infrastructure.

We do have assets. We are prepared to get the maximum value for those assets so we can build new assets that are needed for today and tomorrow. That's an important initiative of this government, and we will continue to do it in a thoughtful, responsible way.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Ontario's Auditor General says that the government is keeping Ontarians in the dark about hydro costs. She says that there's a lack of transparency and the government isn't being upfront about why hydro costs so much.

Now the Liberals, of course, are selling off Hydro One, and that's going to push bills even higher. Instead of more oversight so that Ontarians get all the facts, the Premier is shutting every public watchdog out of Hydro One. Can this Acting Premier explain how getting rid of public oversight will help what the auditor calls a "lack of transparency"?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: With respect to the new broadened Hydro One, in terms of how accountable they are to the public, one of the first things we were able to announce was that the timely issuance of accurate bills is the highest it's been in the history of Hydro One, at a success rate of 99.8%. In addition, the number of customers currently experiencing delayed billings has been reduced to 340 as of June from the peak of over 50,000 during the height of the billing issues.

In addition, the present Hydro One, under new management, has a new CEO, a new CFO and a new chair of the board. They are extremely, extremely sensitive to serving the public and putting customers first.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: How ironic: The minister gets up and lays all of these numbers out, and he knows darn well that there is no opportunity whatsoever—forever—for independent verification of what he says in the House because they took all of the watchdogs out of Hydro One.

The government likes to go on and on, for example, and say that the OEB will protect the public interest. I'd like to direct the Acting Premier's attention to page 219 of the auditor's report, where it says, "The OEB, the protector of consumer interests, was not consulted" about the sell-off of Hydro One.

Can the Acting Premier explain why this government is doing everything in its power to limit public oversight of Hydro One?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The Ontario Energy Board, in addition to controlling rates, also checks on the reliability factors, the efficiency factors of Hydro One. Indeed, for those LDCs, which Hydro One remains, they have increased the fine for non-compliance to \$1 million per day, should Hydro One not be compliant in terms of re-

liability or under any other service requirements. There's tremendous accountability.

There is a new ombudsman in place who will report directly to the board and who can appeal to the Ontario Energy Board—any particular individual who complains.

So there is accountability. There's accountability under the securities legislation, which requires disclosure of salaries of senior managers, and many other accountabilities which I'll deal with later.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Acting Premier; I have some other questions about the Auditor General's report. She said her "significant concerns" were over the fact that "in the context of the federal election campaign and verbal exchanges between the Premier and the Prime Minister," and the fact that "the advertising campaign was set to run right up to federal election voting day"—that she was concerned that this added up to government-funded, partisan ads that ran during the federal election.

Will this Acting Premier tell Ontarians: Did Ontario families pay for advertising that was helping the Liberal Party of Canada?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: You know that as part of the 2015 budget, we did make changes to the Government Advertising Act. We are very proud that we have banned partisan ads in this province, and now we have clearly defined what a partisan ad is.

I think all of us will remember back to the days when the government of Ontario, the taxpayers of Ontario, paid for the then Premier of the province to attack teachers on television. I think we remember when Mike Harris stood in front of the camera and insulted those who teach our students. That kind of advertising is not allowed in this province anymore, and I'm very proud of the changes we have made. So you will not see the Premier, you will not see elected people in ads. There are other restrictions we have made so that we do not have government-funded, taxpayer-funded partisan ads.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's a matter of government priorities. In 2013, New Democrats fought to ensure that there was a five-day home care guarantee. Instead, the Premier promised Ontarians a five-day home care target. But now we learn from the Auditor General that seniors are waiting 200 days for home care. We're used to this government missing targets, but we're talking about the health of Ontario's most vulnerable.

Will the Acting Premier tell Ontarians why the government isn't keeping their promise of a five-day home care wait time?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Health.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I think I missed the two supplementals from the first question, but it seems like a completely different question. I'm happy to address the leader of the third party.

We are making important investments in home and community care. We're making more than \$250 million of new investments in home and community care this year, next year, the year after. That's an important commitment, as we transition Ontarians from hospitals into the home and community where they can be well cared for, and where they want to be, quite frankly. These investments are important.

I welcome the Auditor General's report, as I welcomed her report on our CCACs earlier this year. I've indicated that in the case of the September report, we're going to be implementing all of her recommendations. We accept and are already working on the recommendations she has provided in this update.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplement-ary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Let me tie it all in for the Minister of Health, the Acting Premier and, in fact, the government. The Liberals spent public money on partisan ads to help the federal Liberal Party, so says the auditor. They are leaving seniors waiting 200 days for home care. They aren't protecting children at risk of child abuse in this province. They're causing energy rates to skyrocket and they are not protecting ratepayers. This is one of the most damning auditor reports I've seen in my time at Queen's Park. The Liberals are failing on the fundamentals that people expect of their government, while at the same time, they are helping their own friends.

When will this government get its priorities straight and start working for Ontario families?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Hon. Brad Duguid: You have no right to make an allegation that's false.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure will come to order.

The Minister of Health has the floor.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a result of guidance and reports and good advice, including that from the Auditor General, we have already begun to make important changes in our home and community care sector. Sixty per cent of those who benefit from home care in this province are seniors. That's an important constituency to make sure we're providing the best possible and highest quality of care for them.

But I find it ironic, this question coming from the leader of the third party, the same party, when in government in the 1990s, that actually delisted home care from OHIP. I'm not going to take lessons from a party that took that move. I'm going to actually look at the advice we got from experts like Gail Donner and Kevin Smith and others, who provided us with advice earlier this year; and the Auditor General, who provided us with important recommendations.

We're putting new money into home and community care to make sure that we're taking advantage of innov-

ation and new technologies to provide that highest quality of care we can, which Ontarians deserve.

MINISTRY GRANTS

Mr. Monte McNaughton: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development. Recent reports have come out which raise some serious questions about the lack of judgment, oversight and long-term planning within the Ministry of Economic Development.

The Auditor General's report shows that this ministry is handing out taxpayer grants to companies, up to \$130,000 per job, and doesn't even bother to monitor whether those jobs are retained or if the company is providing any economic value to the province of Ontario.

This government's own fall economic statement slashed jobs projections by 53,000 positions over the next two years alone. Will the minister admit that his scheme to pick winners and losers and his lack of oversight and judgment is costing Ontario jobs?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The allegations the member is making are patently false. The fact of the matter is every contract we get into, for every dollar we put out in business supports, is totally tied to job creation or job retention or the investments that the private sector partner is making. If they don't comply with their end of the bargain, either the money doesn't flow—because it often flows in phases—or it gets clawed back.

1100

Some 94% of the investments we've made that have helped create or retain 145,000 jobs in this province have met their objectives. That's a pretty good track record. Every one of those agreements comes with full accountability. So the member's allegations are patently false.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton Mountain, come to order.

Supplementary.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Mr. Speaker, again to the minister: In estimates committee two weeks ago, the minister reassured myself and other members of our caucus that the ministry had a stringent process for deciding on project funding. Yet the auditor's report clearly shows us that over 90% of companies never submitted documentation to show that they even needed taxpayer money. It also highlighted numerous instances of companies closing soon after receiving funding or the government even writing off loans.

Using taxpayer dollars to hand out big cheques to big companies that don't even need them doesn't benefit the people of Ontario. It benefits Liberal politicians who like favourable press releases. How can people trust this government with their money when this minister is practising crony capitalism instead of sound economic management?

Hon. Brad Duguid: We've put into place a very stringent level of accountability, both within the prioritization of these projects and the amount of information that companies have to share with us before they get ap-

proved. Only one in 100 companies that have enquired through these funds actually makes it through the screening. We look at everything from whether the company would have made the investment in the first place, to the rate of return for taxpayers, to the level of investment that goes into productivity improvement, to the level of investment that goes towards innovation, to the level of investment that goes towards exporting. There is probably not a jurisdiction anywhere in North America, if not anywhere in the world today, that has a process that is that stringent.

We'll continue to make these investments. We're going to create jobs in this province. The opposition might not be onside, but workers in Ontario are.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France G  linas: Ma question est pour le ministre de la Sant  . Last week's report from the Auditor General is a stinging indictment of this government's failure to protect our residents in long-term-care homes. The Auditor General said that the ministry takes up to nine months to investigate high-risk complaints, which should be resolved in three days. The backlog of critical inspection has more than doubled in the last two years, and the result is that the Liberal government is putting long-term-care residents at risk and failing to ensure that their rights are protected. Those are not my words, Speaker; those are the words of the Auditor General herself.

After so many warnings, after so many promises to do better, after so many excuses, how can the minister defend the failures to protect our loved ones living in long-term-care homes?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: To the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I want to thank the member opposite for the question. I also want to thank the Auditor General for her findings on the long-term-care quality inspection programs. We not only take the Auditor General's findings and recommendations seriously, we have accepted all of her recommendations. Furthermore, we have not only accepted the Auditor General's recommendations, we are already implementing all of her recommendations. We are doing this because we take the safety of our long-term-care residents seriously.

I'm committed to improving on our performance, and I'm pleased to report that all of our outstanding high-risk complaints, as determined by the Auditor General, have been inspected. Once again, I just want to reiterate that I want the people of Ontario to know initiatives are already well under way to implement the Auditor General's—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

M^{me} France G  linas: The Liberals are failing some of the most vulnerable seniors in our province and their families, who trust that the government should be looking out for the well-being of long-term-care residents. It should never take months—close to a year—to follow up

on a high-risk complaint. Those are complaints of sexual harassments, complaints of physical abuse.

It should never be the case that a resident actually passes away before the ministry acts on their concerns. And when complaints increase by 47%, as is the case in London, this government should not shrug its shoulders and say, "All is good." They should figure out what is wrong.

When will the minister stop trying to defend the failures of this Liberal government and start standing up for the rights of long-term-care residents? They deserve it.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: As I said, we not only take the Auditor General's recommendations seriously, but we are already implementing those recommendations, and work is well under way on this. The reason we are already implementing these recommendations is because we do take her findings seriously and we are committed to the safety of our long-term-care residents.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to take the opportunity to thank our front-line inspectors for their work in inspecting our long-term-care homes.

While we acknowledge that we must do better, I am pleased that the Auditor General has acknowledged that "the ministry's new comprehensive inspection process was an improvement over its previous inspection program" and that the inspection process "is more extensive than those in other provinces." That said, we must do better, and we will do better.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Ma question est pour le ministre du D  veloppement   conomique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure, the Honourable Brad Duguid. Speaker, as you'll know, the United Nations conference on climate change taking place in Paris will conclude this week, on December 11. While putting a price on carbon has become a priority for countries and jurisdictions around the world, I, of course, believe that there's more that we need to be doing, acting collectively, to deal with the trajectory of climate change.

As a physician, I know particularly about the effects on human health of unregulated emissions, water pollution and air that is slowly being poisoned. I believe that there are also economic opportunities for our province if we find ways to lead in the development of clean technology.

Speaker, what is the minister doing to tackle these issues?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The member is absolutely right: Tackling climate change will require more than the efforts of our governments to put a price on carbon. I'm with Bill Gates on this and commend him and business leaders around the world for forming an international business coalition called the Breakthrough Energy Coalition. Their goal is to invest a billion dollars in technologies that will help solve the climate change challenge.

When this government made the decision to eliminate coal and move Ontario's energy system to cleaner sources

of power, our efforts fostered a clean tech sector in Ontario. Ontario is now one of the fastest-growing and competitive clean tech sectors in the world. We've taken a number of measures that support the growth in this area. The Ontario Innovation Demonstration Fund, the Ontario Emerging Technologies Fund and the Advanced Manufacturing Fund are just a few of the areas where we've worked with this sector.

I'm excited about the growth of Ontario's clean tech sector and the thousands of jobs that it's creating here in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Minister, for your action on this file.

In fact, the clean tech industry is a notable economic growth opportunity for Ontario. We are home to about 3,000 clean technology companies that employ more than 65,000 people.

Speaker, we are already global leaders in this developing field. Our partnership with clean tech venture capitalists—for example, Tom Rand—has also been beneficial, along with the passing of the Green Energy and Green Economy Act, the most progressive piece of climate change legislation in North America.

The opportunities in this industry for Ontario continue to accelerate. What is this government doing to help our clean tech industry go global?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The member is absolutely right to mention the important contribution that innovators like Tom Rand are making in growing our clean tech sector.

I firmly believe that supporting Ontario's clean tech sector will not only help solve climate change, but it will also grow a globally competitive clean tech sector here in Ontario.

Going global is absolutely crucial to those efforts. In our recent trade missions to China, we've helped advance that goal. The Advanced Energy Centre and WaterTAP signed important agreements to open doors to deploy Ontario energy and water technologies in China. Canadian Solar signed an agreement worth over \$700 million with Chinese officials, which makes the member from Guelph very happy. Hydrogenics signed agreements to supply fuel cell technology for public transportation buses in China.

Mr. Speaker, we're committed to building a highly competitive clean tech sector in Ontario, and we're committed to taking it global.

1110

NORTHERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development. The minister has a wide-reaching responsibility to ensure that sound business decisions are made to grow Ontario's economy, overall employment and infrastructure. The Auditor General's report remarked that the minister "has a mandate to cover all of Ontario."

The minister's own mandate letter from the Premier tasks him to support communities still suffering from the global recession, and—listen to this part—particularly in northern Ontario. Well, Speaker, I guess the minister has missed the mark on this front, because the last time his ministry funded a business project in northern Ontario was 2008. That's so long ago that this minister can't even take credit for it.

Mr. Speaker, it has been seven years since this government used the economic development capital fund to fund a project in northern Ontario. How much longer do the people and businesses of northern Ontario have to wait?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I think I had better refer this to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I appreciate having the opportunity to respond.

May I say, first of all, that our ministry works incredibly closely with the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure on a number of projects, and certainly on our long-term vision for economic growth in northern Ontario.

But what we are most proud of is the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, a \$100-million fund that has been put in place, raising from \$60 million to \$100 million a year. Over the last 10 years, we've been able to create or retain over 25,000 jobs as a result of private sector capital expansion and public sector projects that have gone in place.

The member for Parry Sound–Muskoka knows that very, very well, although may I say that he hasn't always been 100% supportive of the projects that have gone to his own riding, despite the fact—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Norm Miller: Qualifying for an NOHFC grant does not disqualify northern Ontario businesses from accessing economic development fund dollars. According to the Auditor General's report, the ministry does not consider northern companies big enough to warrant funding, nor do they generally fund projects in the important northern sectors of mining and forestry.

What does this mean for northern Ontario? It means that last year, Arclin closed its doors in North Bay. It means that Sudbury's unemployment rate rose by 2% last year. It means Cliffs left millions of dollars invested in the Ring of Fire on the table, just to get out of Ontario. I would hardly call that economic development, Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit to fulfilling the mandate spelled out by the Premier to provide economic development funding to northern Ontario? Don't freeze out the north.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I am tempted to give the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry an opportunity to respond, because I know what he'd want to say is how pleased he is that the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry is now part of the Jobs and Prosperity Fund for all across the province, a huge commitment from our government of \$200 million, indeed.

May I say, Mr. Speaker, that when one looks at the commitment that we've made on the northern highways program, over \$5 billion over the last 10 years that has gone to northern Ontario—the member across the hall here understands how important that is in terms of economic development all across the north. Again, we are so proud.

Over \$1 billion over the last 10 years was invested through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp., which has actually leveraged about \$3.1 billion in dollars spent on northern projects, whether it's the private sector, which that party actually withdrew from entirely, or the public sector, which we continue to support.

CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Last week, when I asked about children being placed in homes with people who have a history of child abuse, the minister said she is going to issue another directive. Well, Speaker, if the issue is that directives are not being followed, I have a hard time believing that simply issuing another directive is going to fix these very serious problems, not to mention that the minister claimed that she was surprised by the AG's findings.

Speaker, it's the minister's responsibility to know what's going on in her own portfolio. We need real action to protect our most vulnerable kids in care, not more talk.

Will the minister please explain to vulnerable kids how issuing another directive is going to keep them safe?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Again, I want to say that I take the recommendations of the Auditor General very seriously. While she has noted significant progress since the last audit, I fully recognize there is more work to do. We are already addressing a number of things with respect to improving the child welfare system.

With respect to the registry checks, although directives were previously issued, it is most unfortunate that that does not seem to be happening in some cases. Anything less than that is not good enough, Speaker. So I'll be instructing boards of all CASs to develop a quality improvement plan regarding a number of issues associated with the Auditor General's report. I'll be requiring that they supply those plans to the ministry. If I'm not satisfied with that, there will be more action taken.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Miss Monique Taylor: Speaker, as you hear from the minister's response, she absolutely has no idea what's going on in this file. The same issues were highlighted in the 2006 Auditor General's report, and they have gotten worse. This government is failing kids in Ontario who are in care. They're placing them with known child abusers, not implementing recommendations that follow the death of a child in care, not doing background—

Interjection.

Miss Monique Taylor: You should pay attention—not doing background checks for people who work with

kids in care, closing cases too soon, taking seven months to complete investigations of abuse.

The ministry and the minister need to take responsibility over this file and ensure that they are protecting kids in care in this province, which she has failed to do.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I take my job extremely seriously as the Minister of Children and Youth Services, and nothing is more important to me or my government than protecting vulnerable children who need protection in Ontario. And we've taken action. We've developed performance agreements. We're implementing a new computer system so there's one record for every child in this province. We have introduced performance indicators.

I will be following up on the very specific things the Auditor General talked about last week: How long does it take an investigation to be completed? Why are they being reopened? And what's going wrong with the checking of the child registry? These are the questions I'm putting before the children's aid societies. I'll be meeting with the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies a week from today and I'll be taking further action.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: My question is to the Associate Minister of Finance. Minister, my constituents are very pleased to see our government's continued progress on building the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. Many individuals, including my children and their friends, have spoken to me about the challenges they face in saving for retirement and the ways that they will benefit from the ORPP. They know the plan will help ease the anxiety they have about achieving financial security in their golden years.

Last week's fall economic statement highlighted a number of important steps our government is taking to build a best-in-class plan that will enhance retirement security for Ontarians.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, could you please update the House on the recent progress made on the ORPP?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I want to thank the member from Barrie for this important question. In the recent fall economic statement, our government announced the appointment of the initial board of directors for the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan Administration Corp., which will be a professional and arms-length entity. The board will be led by Susan Wolburgh Jenah, who will serve as chair; Murray Gold; and Richard Nesbitt.

Members of the initial board were recruited based on their expertise, experience and leadership. Each board member brings a diversity of experience in key areas, including investment and asset management, pension administration, legal and regulatory compliance, and financial operations and management. We are very pleased to put in place this strong leadership that will be instrumental in strengthening retirement security for the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you to the minister for that response. I know my constituents will be pleased to learn that our government has a highly skilled and experienced initial board at the helm of this very important administrative entity.

Mr. Speaker, again through you to the Associate Minister of Finance, I know the government passed legislation to establish the ORPP AC earlier this spring. This legislation outlined a number of responsibilities of the ORPP AC with regard to administering the plan. In conversations I've had with people in my riding, some people still think that the government will be responsible for managing the ORPP contributions. I know the government has corrected the record on this myth a number of times.

Can the minister please confirm what role the ORPP AC will have with regard to the administration and implementation of the ORPP?

1120

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I want to once again thank the hard-working member from Barrie for that question. The ORPP AC, as an independent, arm's-length entity, will be responsible for the administration of the plan for the benefit of the members of the plan. It will be responsible for enrolling eligible employers, collecting and investing contributions, administering benefits, and communicating with employers and members.

The board will oversee the start-up activities of the administrative corporation. This is central to achieving our goal of ensuring that by 2020 all Ontario workers are covered by the ORPP or a comparable workplace plan.

We believe that after a lifetime of hard work and contributing to the economy, Ontarians deserve a secure retirement. I am confident that these individuals, with their skills and expertise, will be able to help millions of Ontarians achieve just that.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

Mr. Rick Nicholls: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, you continue to have a crisis in corrections. Last Wednesday, inmates at the Toronto South Detention Centre ignited several fires, throwing fireballs at officers and setting cells afire, causing five correctional officers to be hospitalized and dozens of staff treated for smoke inhalation. Smoke filled all 10 floors of tower A. To quote a reliable source, "We were very fortunate nobody died in this incident."

Minister, emergency safeguards were not working. The building automation system appeared to be inactive. The fire suppression system, while being reset, prevented Toronto Fire Services from responding immediately. Fast-acting staff had to bypass management delays to rescue and separate inmates.

Can the minister finally take this situation seriously and put in place management that will respect the staff and inmates and enact required safety protocols?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I do want to thank our entire correctional staff, both the management and correctional officers, who work extremely hard every single day. In that particular instance, they made sure that all safety protocols were followed to make sure that nobody was seriously hurt. That is why we, of course, focus so much on training and ensuring that when incidents like these occur, as they could occur in any large facility, there are appropriate steps that are taken immediately to protect the health and safety of our corrections staff, but also that of inmates.

In this particular instance, I thank all our correctional staff, both management and correctional officers, for the right steps they took to ensure that the facility is safe and inmates and staff are safe as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Back to the minister: Ticking time bombs continue to explode at TSDC. Late November, an officer had a harrowing experience. The officer had just stepped into the elevator when she was thrown into darkness with a power failure that caused the elevator to drop three floors with great speed, and then suddenly stop. The elevator doors didn't open as they should have in a power failure. Instead, the elevator dropped further. The officer was quite shaken and could only think that the elevator would plummet the entire 10 storeys.

The minister's government is not taking these issues seriously. Instead of doing the right thing, they put a gag order on staff so the public does not hear these horror stories. When will the minister do his job and get this place fixed up to the standards it was designed to be at?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Let me make it absolutely very clear that I and this government take our job extremely seriously. When it comes to the health and safety of our correctional staff and that of inmates, there is no more important element than that. That is why we make appropriate investments in training. In fact, as I mentioned before in this House, our big focus is around transformation of correctional services.

Just last Friday, we hired and trained another 92 correctional officers—they came through our college—who are being dispersed all across the province. That brings the total of hiring in the last two years to 571 new correctional officers, and we'll be hiring more with appropriate training.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Acting Premier. On Wednesday, we learned that the Liberals' freeze on hospital funding will force St. Joseph's Healthcare in Hamilton to cut a staggering \$26 million from next year's budget. There is no way to cut another \$26 million from the hospital's budget without hurting patient care.

On Friday, we saw only the first sign of these deep cuts when we learned that the seven-bed mental health unit will be shut down and 12 full-time jobs will be elim-

inated. It's just the start of deep cuts to the health care services that families in Hamilton rely on.

Will this Liberal government do the right thing, stop the \$26-million cut to St. Joseph's Healthcare and start supporting mental health services instead of cutting them?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Health.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question because it allows me to provide additional clarity to the decision that has been made by St. Joseph's hospital in Hamilton.

To start off, it's important to note very specifically that the beds in question remain fully available to the health care system on a go-forward basis. These beds will be re-added to the system as patient demand rises. Also, if there becomes a need in acute or in long-term care within the hospital, these beds can and will also be made available for that purpose.

The greater flexibility with regard to these beds in question—which will remain available—will actually allow the hospital to provide the important care for the individual who needs it at that moment in time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This government is squeezing the hospitals and putting them between a rock and a hard place when it comes to patient care. The Liberals talk a good game about mental health, but here's what people see: Forced by the Liberals to cut \$26 million, St. Joe's says it's entering a period of "extreme cost restraint." Front-line health care workers say they are being "crushed" by these provincial funding cuts.

We all know that the most vulnerable patient and their families will pay the price for deep health care cuts. It means longer wait times and more stress for workers, but the Liberals don't seem to care.

When will this Liberal government wake up to the damage that it is causing, do the right thing for families and put a stop to these deep cuts to front-line health care, in Hamilton and right across the province of Ontario?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: In fact, in the last decade in Hamilton alone, we've increased the number of forensic mental health beds by 42%. Our investment province-wide in mental health has almost doubled from half a billion dollars to a billion dollars. We're absolutely committed to mental health and addictions programs and support. We're increasing that on an annual basis.

In fact, I think the member opposite would agree that, often, outcomes are better within the community, so supporting those community mental health organizations and the beds that they provide is also important. We've increased that amount significantly, to \$62 million in Hamilton. We've opened 498 new beds in Hamilton and redeveloped an additional 224 beds in Hamilton in the last decade. Sometimes the community is the best place to take care of these individuals and provide the supports that they need.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question this morning is for the Minister of Transportation. Quite often in this

House, we speak about the importance of transit for those living in our communities. In my own community of Davenport, using transit is a way of life. We use it to get to work every day and back home to our families in the evenings.

But transit is not only an important mode of transportation for those living in my community; it is also a critical instrument that we can use as a government to help combat climate change. I know the minister recently made an important announcement about the gas tax program. Can the minister please tell members of this House more about this announcement and how it will positively impact the environment?

1130

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to begin by thanking the outstanding member from Davenport for her question, for her championing for her community and for her advocacy. It's a very important question.

She is 100% right: Just a number of days ago, I was in Durham to announce that our government—

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Yes.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Yes, Durham, which includes the wonderful communities of Whitby, Ajax, Pickering, Clarington, Bowmanville and others. I was happy to be there to announce that our government is providing Ontario municipalities with over \$332 million in gas tax funding this year. That's \$11 million more this year versus last year.

Our gas tax program helps eligible municipalities improve and expand their transit services. Specifically, it allows them to increase accessibility, buy more transit vehicles, add more routes and extend hours of service, making it easier for people to use public transit and make greener choices. Last year alone, there was an increase of more than 217 million passenger trips on municipal transit systems compared to 2003—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I want to thank the minister for his response. I know that those living in my community will be glad to hear that our government is both investing in Ontario municipalities and helping the environment through the gas tax program. But we know that there is always a risk that transportation-related emissions could increase if we do not help Ontarians make greener choices.

My community of Davenport wants to know that our government is committed to making those investments in transit and transportation that will help protect our environment.

Could the minister please tell members of this House what other investments our government is making to help us reach our sustainability targets?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member from Davenport for her follow-up question. Our government is committed to making those crucial investments that support GHG emissions reduction through the use of public transit and other congestion-reducing measures. That's why we continue to deliver on this promise by investing

in transit to get cars off our roads, whether it's added GO service on the Kitchener line from Mount Pleasant to Union Station, which will turn more drivers into transit users, or through important initiatives like #CycleOn, which are helping to reduce emissions and keep Ontarians active. We've also introduced the Electric Vehicle Incentive Program, and the Electric Vehicle Charging Incentive Program, which are helping drivers make a more environmentally friendly decision when purchasing a vehicle.

Our government knows how important public transit is to managing congestion, which is why we will continue to make those investments that will make a positive impact on our environment. And I thank the member from Davenport for her advocacy on behalf of her constituents.

HIGHWAY TOLLS

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. This morning, the transportation minister unveiled his Liberal government's latest plan to dig into our wallets to pay for their failures. This time, they're doing it on the backs of Ontario motorists—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Deputy House leader, second time.

Mr. Michael Harris: —asking us to pay again for the privilege of driving on our own roads. The minister can frame it whatever way he wants—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Sorry: warned.

Mr. Michael Harris: —as to motorist options, but when it comes down to it, the lanes he is designating for tolls are the same lanes taxpayers have already paid for. Minister, why are you making Ontarians pay twice to drive on roads that we've already paid for?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I know that I made the announcement about two hours ago. It's unfortunate that the member from Kitchener-Conestoga didn't take the time to actually look at the announcement itself and would rather, as is typical for that member and for that Conservative Party, play politics with an important issue.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): To the Chair, please.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: What I announced this morning, Speaker, is that no general purpose lanes in the provincial highway network will be removed or converted in order to deliver on our HOT plan. That means that any individual who currently drives in a general purpose lane will continue to have that opportunity going forward. At the same time, anybody who chooses to carpool—that's carpooling with two or more people in the vehicle—will be able to use the HOT lanes for free, just as they can currently use HOV lanes.

What this announcement is all about is making sure that motorists across our region have more options to alleviate the congestion challenge that we have in the GTHA and across the province. Our government, under our Premier, has a plan to move the province forward. I'd love one day—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Michael Harris: Speaker, it may be the QEW today, but we all know we'll be seeing HOT lanes on the 400 series as the minister pushes his latest revenue tool down our roads.

The minister may want to boast about their HOT lane bling, but Ontario residents shouldn't have to pay for it. In the last year, we've been told the Wynne Liberal transit plan will be funded by everything from the Hydro One sell-off to green bonds. Today, we're told it's HOT lanes, but we all know that when the tolls start rolling in, they'll be headed to pay for government mismanagement and excess.

Will the minister guarantee us today that not one cent of these highway tolls will pay for anything other than transit?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: As I said this morning when I made the announcement, I'll be back in the spring with an update regarding the QEW pilot that we're going to be running as it relates to high-occupancy tolls.

But what's interesting, I think, for everybody here in this chamber, and of course those watching at home, is that in his opportunity to stand up in a supplementary and shine and to show the people of his own caucus and to show his leader that that member from Kitchener has a plan to build this province up in terms of infrastructure and transit, or that that leader has an opportunity to present a plan for building the province up, time after time after time, day after day, in this Legislature and in talking to media, they refuse to talk about what their plan is to move the province forward.

We're investing in transportation. We're investing in infrastructure. We're putting more choices on the road for our motorists. We're alleviating congestion. We've got the right plan; we've got the right Premier. One day, maybe that member will stand up and do the same thing.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. New question.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Ms. Cindy Forster: My question is to the Acting Premier. In the 2015 speech from the throne, the Trudeau government committed to "not resort to devices like ... omnibus bills to avoid scrutiny."

Too bad that wasn't the case with the Liberals here. Instead, the Liberal government buried what they knew was going to be a problem into their Harper-style omnibus budget bill by introducing Conservative legislation that releases a single company, corporate giant EllisDon, from its 60-year obligation to hire unionized workers in this province.

The thousands of affected tradespeople here in the province are, and should rightly be, concerned when the Minister of Labour continually refers to an agreement that was never ratified.

Will the Acting Premier strike down the EllisDon schedule from Bill 144?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thanks once again to the member who is taking such an interest in this issue, as we all are.

What we've done with this legislation is address an anomaly that impacts a single company and no other in this province. What we've brought forward is a practical solution, a way of achieving that solution, after consultation with the parties that are involved in this.

In the past, what we would have had go forward is a solution to this problem that would have served the interests of one side but would have given nothing to the other side. I think most people in this House agree that if we're going to resolve this issue that has been around since the 1950s, we need to do it in a way that both sides come out of this with something.

What we've put forward in the bill and what I propose to put in the regulation as it moves forward is formed on the basis of what was an arbitrator's report to me. I plan to frame the regulation around that arbitrator's report.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Windsor—Tecumseh on a point of order.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Earlier, the member from Essex introduced two members of Unifor Local 444 visiting from Windsor; they've been joined by a third. I'd like to welcome Manny Cardoso here. Welcome to Queen's Park this morning.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The time for question period is over. There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1139 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Arthur Potts: It gives me great pleasure today to introduce my mother, Dawn Potts, who is in the east gallery. She's coming to hear her son speak to his first private member's bill, at third reading. Welcome my mother, Dawn Potts.

I'd also like to introduce Michael Vorobej from Ottawa, who's also here to witness the debate this afternoon. Welcome, Michael.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

BRUCE POWER

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm honoured to rise to recognize a milestone agreement signed between Bruce Power and the Independent Electricity System Operator that will create 23,000 jobs, secure the production of 6,300 megawatts of energy and generate \$6.3 billion in annual

economic benefits. Most importantly, this deal secures the delivery of sustainable, clean, affordable baseload power in Ontario for decades to come. This is, indeed, great news for my community of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, great news for my colleague and MPP for Huron–Bruce, Lisa Thompson, and for the entire province.

As more than 90% of Bruce Power's spend takes place right here in Ontario and supports some 160 supply chain companies throughout our province, the refurbishment of the Bruce Power units near Tiverton will ensure valuable jobs and the positive economic health of the area and the province. It will create long-term employment for Ontario's building and construction trades, as the Bruce site is home to boilermakers, carpenters, electricians, insulators, ironworkers and rodmen, labourers, millwrights, operating engineers, painters, pipefitters and plumbers, sheet metal and roofers, and teamsters.

Over the past 14 years, Bruce Power has developed a strong working relationship with these trades, with millions of hours of tradesperson work being carried out on- and off-site.

Having worked at Bruce Power as operations manager, I was actually involved in the work of restarting Bruce units 1 and 2. I can tell you first-hand that Bruce Power is Ontario's success story.

I want to take a moment to recognize and thank Duncan Hawthorne, Bruce Power's president and CEO, the board of directors and their workers, whose efforts over the years have helped to deliver this next phase of site development. Under their leadership, Bruce Power has returned its eight-unit site to its full capacity, allowing Ontario to phase out coal-fired power generation while providing low-cost, reliable and carbon-free electricity to families and businesses.

Again, this announcement is a significant one. It will allow Bruce Power to immediately invest in life-extension activities for units 3 to 8, to support a long-term refurbishment program that will commence on unit 6 in 2020. The deal will also see Bruce Power invest about \$13 billion of its own money and assume full responsibility for any cost overruns on the refurbishments of the six reactors.

The Ontario PC Party has always supported nuclear power and Bruce Power. We built nuclear, one of the most environmentally friendly forms of power we have, led by Premier William Davis. We need to continue to go down that path and make sure we're providing baseload power that people can afford.

WELLAND NDP

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'd like to thank the hundreds of community members, dedicated volunteers, local businesses and unions, and elected officials from across the political spectrum who filled the Croatian National Home in my riding of Welland last week to celebrate 40 years of NDP representation to our constituents and our strong community.

The evening reflected the strength of our riding association and celebrated the outstanding work and fond memories of former MPPs Mel Swart and Peter Kormos.

I'd especially like to thank Jim Wilson from Simcoe-Grey and Jim Bradley from St. Catharines for attending the event and taking part and sharing their stories about Mel and Peter.

Our leader, Andrea Horwath, and many of our own MPPs also joined in the celebration. We shared stories, mementoes and many good laughs with the friends and families of both of these political icons.

As part of the evening, the inaugural Lidkea Award was presented to my long-time friend Susan Pruyn. The award serves to honour a community member for dedicated service to a community cause and is in memory of long-time Thorold NDP activist Bill Lidkea. My staff in Welland describe Susan as someone who is dedicated day in, day out when it comes to community service.

Congratulations to Susan and to the countless community members in my riding for an incredible 40 years.

FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

ÉDUCATION EN FRANÇAIS

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: I rise today to announce that I have laid upon the table a motion to ask the government for an official apology to Ontarians for regulation 17. This regulation, issued in 1912 under Premier Whitney, prohibited the use of French in primary schools in Ontario. This deplorable regulation was an attack on the Franco-Ontarian community. It was also a blow to the Ontario's rich and diverse history.

La majorité des Franco-Ontariens connaissent bien le règlement 17. Ils connaissent l'histoire des soeurs Desloges, de l'école Guigues à Ottawa, et des mères qui ont résisté à ce règlement discriminatoire à l'aide d'épingles à chapeau.

Associations like the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario were created; Ontario's daily French newspaper, *Le Droit*, was born; and in the 1920s, the Liberal MPP from Russell, MPP Bélanger, publicly denounced this regulation every chance he got.

Aujourd'hui, je tiens à reconnaître que le règlement 17 est un symbole puissant pour la communauté franco-ontarienne.

Today the Ontario government fully recognizes that French schools are absolutely essential in fostering and maintaining Franco-Ontarian culture and identity. That is why we must recognize what happened in the past.

TREE PLANTING

Mr. Ted Arnott: We know that humankind must reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but it doesn't end there. We also know that trees absorb carbon dioxide, and humankind needs to plant more trees. On October 22, I brought forward a private member's resolution calling upon the government to establish an Ontario Green

Legacy program to mark Ontario's 150th anniversary as a province within Canada. This initiative, which would be based on the county of Wellington's Green Legacy program, would seek to plant 150 million trees starting in 2017.

My resolution was passed unanimously by the Legislature, with members from all parties speaking in favour of it. I want to again thank the many people who support my resolution, both in this House and outside of it. I especially want to acknowledge the role of the county of Wellington, and in particular Scott Wilson and the late Brad Whitcombe, for their vision and leadership in establishing Wellington county's Green Legacy program.

Since my resolution was passed by the House, support has continued to grow. Last week, I met with representatives from the Credit Valley conservation authority, the David Suzuki Foundation, Forests Ontario and Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests. They were all very supportive of the idea of an Ontario Green Legacy initiative. On Wednesday of this week, I'm going to be meeting with representatives from the Highway of Heroes Tribute and Landscape Ontario to discuss it.

I spoke to the Minister of Natural Resources on November 5 to follow up on my resolution, asking him to reach out to the county of Wellington and invite county council and staff and many of their representatives to meet with them. I hope that he will do so, as well as publicly commit to moving forward on this initiative. The year 2017 will be here before we know it; let's get going.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Mr. Paul Miller: Ontario libraries have a long history of fueling community partnerships and collaborative programs. They are vital community hubs and critical infrastructure in the delivery of social services at all levels of government. Our libraries provide essential digital access to all, regardless of means, and our libraries offer over 200,000 programs every year attended by over 3.7 million people.

The proposed Ontario's Culture Strategy is intended to enable the province's various communities to tell their stories and preserve them for future generations. I ask that the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport recognize the integral role of libraries in the development of his strategy.

Libraries in rural areas and First Nations communities play a special role in their communities, which often lack access to the intensity and diversity of services found in urban centres. They provide agricultural and business development resources and important business spaces. They house municipal information desks and they are key locations for local community groups, services and fundraising efforts.

There is a library in almost every community in Ontario, with a diversity of locations, patrons, expertise and programming. However, only 46 of our 133 First Nation communities have public libraries. Funding for First Nation libraries averages just \$15,000 a year—pretty

pathetic. Where they exist, they serve as an accessible gathering place and information-sharing resource. Our First Nation communities deserve good libraries, both as a public service and as part of our responsibility to improve education outcomes.

1310

SENIOR GUYANESE FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: As we all know, individuals are now living longer and the number of seniors in Ontario is increasing. Our objective is to keep Ontario seniors healthy, active and independent for as long as possible, and for them to feel safe and supported.

I recently attended an event hosted by the Senior Guyanese Friendship Association, which was founded in 1973. They provide services to keep their seniors physically and mentally active, all through their own fundraising efforts. They organize bus trips to the theatre, farmers' markets and other social events. They also make mats and hats out of milk bags, which are sent to countries hit by natural disasters.

Mr. Speaker, a few awards were presented at the event that I would like to highlight.

Agatha Schroeder, at 103, is the most senior member in terms of age and membership. Lucille Calder, 92, received the annual Leyland Brewster Award for demonstrated camaraderie, enthusiasm, sportsmanship and friendliness during their activities. The Nonagenarian Award was presented to Beryl Hoyte, a veteran of the organization who stays healthy by walking; Eugene Nestor, an accomplished artist and caregiver; Miriam Smart, a positive individual who's proud to reach 90; and Joyce Kawall, who still enjoys the dance floor to Caribbean music.

I'm proud that we recognize their contribution to our society, and I encourage the government to continue supporting seniors.

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Laurie Scott: Last week, the Auditor General released a scathing report on how Hydro One is a poorly run distribution and transmission company. In her report, she cited that the government is paying \$407 million to companies to not produce power, \$339 million to produce more power than we need, and \$32 million to export our excess supply.

She stated that the average family will be overcharged a total of \$32,000 for electricity. If the government didn't have such ridiculous energy policies, imagine what families could do with that money. They could pay their bills, buy a car, put a down payment on a home, or put their children through college or university.

Now the Ontario Energy Board has issued a directive to Hydro One to recover its distribution costs by a new single fixed rate instead of by usage. This means that

Hydro One could raise bills again for small, rural families by up to \$140 per year, starting next year.

Enough is enough. As Ontario continues to sink deeper into energy poverty, this government needs to take a real, hard look at its energy policies and start putting Ontarians first.

REFUGEES

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I rise today to speak about the incredible courage of refugees and the generosity of so many Canadians.

As you know, the federal government has committed to accepting 25,000 refugees from the Syrian conflict by the end of 2016, including those being privately sponsored. Many of them will make Ontario their new home.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud that Halton residents from all walks of life are coming together to improve the lives of refugee families. Members of service organizations, churches, mosques and individuals are rallying to help in any way they can. In fact, a recent gathering of Burlington and Halton residents on this issue drew hundreds of people wanting to support refugee families.

I'm looking forward to seeing the first planes carrying refugees from camps in Jordan and Turkey landing on Canadian soil in coming days. It will be a proud day for all of us.

But our job as Canadians does not end there. It's going to take all of us working together to help refugees and their families get settled once they're here. Halton region has already established a relationship with the Halton Multicultural Council to help developing issues related to refugees.

I know Ontario will be working closely with settlement agencies, community groups, hospitals, public health units and community centres as they prepare to support the incoming refugees. I'm pleased to see how hard our government and our residents are working to ensure seamless, coordinated and caring support for refugees arriving in Ontario. It's the right thing to do.

HANUKKAH

Mr. Monte Kwinter: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Last night, December 6, was the first night of Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of rededication, which is also known as the Festival of Lights.

Hanukkah is the time when Jews throughout the world have begun an eight-day celebration commemorating two miracles.

The first miracle was the victory of the Maccabees over the mighty Greek army. The Maccabees were a small group of Jews that lacked weaponry and were vastly outnumbered by the Greeks. They rebelled in response to the Greeks' attempt to force a Hellenistic and godless lifestyle on them, and against all odds, they won.

When the Maccabees liberated the temple in Jerusalem from the Greek invaders, they found only one day's

worth of pure and undefiled olive oil to light the menorah.

The second miracle occurred when the oil burned for eight days and nights. For each of the eight days of Hanukkah, Jews celebrate by lighting the menorah, a special candelabra with nine branches, each day after nightfall, except for Friday, when candles are lit shortly before sunset.

The message of Hanukkah can appeal to everyone, regardless of one's faith or beliefs. The illumination of the menorah is meant to symbolize an end to war, persecution and oppression. It represents freedom of religion, the restoration of one's autonomy and the triumph of good over evil, of light over darkness. This message is as relevant today as it was for the Maccabees 2,000 years ago.

PETITIONS

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Mr. Bill Walker: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government's proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP) is a mandatory pension plan which would target small businesses and their employees; and

"Whereas there has been little to no discussion on what the costs would be, or who would pay them; and

"Whereas affected businesses would be hit with up to \$1,643 per employee, per year in new payroll taxes starting in 2017; and

"Whereas affected employees would have up to \$1,643 per year extra deducted from their paycheques, and it would take 40 years for them to see the full pension benefits; and

"Whereas the Canadian Federation of Independent Business predicts the unemployment rate in Ontario would rise by 0.5%, and there would be a reduction in wages over the longer term; and

"Whereas all of these costs would be shouldered exclusively by small businesses and their employees; and

"Whereas public sector and big business employees who already have a pension plan will not be asked to pay into the plan;

"We, the undersigned, do not support implementation of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan and petition the government of Ontario to axe the pension tax."

I fully support it and will send it with page Megan.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. John Vanthof: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the provincial government has cancelled the Northlander passenger train which served the residents of northeastern Ontario; and

"Whereas the provincial government has closed bus stations and is cancelling bus routes despite promising enhanced bus services to replace the train; and

"Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission (ONTC) has been given a mandate that its motor coach division must be self-sustaining; and

"Whereas Metrolinx, the crown corporation that provides train and bus service in the GTA ... is subsidized by more than \$100 million annually; and

"Whereas the subsidy to Metrolinx has increased annually for the last seven years;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To direct the Minister of Northern Development and Mines to reverse the decision to cancel bus routes immediately and to treat northerners equitably in decisions regarding public transportation."

I wholeheartedly agree and will send my petition down with Hannah.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Petitions? The member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. No, sorry; Sarnia–Lambton.

Mr. Robert Bailey: We're close. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I'll send this down with Michelle. I agree with it and sign the petition.

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LONG-TERM CARE

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition that was sent to me from Tina DiDomenico. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Ontario ranks ninth of 10 provinces in terms of the total per capita funding allocated to long-term care; and

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care data shows that there are more than 30,000

Ontarians waiting for long-term-care placements and wait-times have tripled since 2005; and

“Whereas there is a perpetual shortage of staff in long-term-care facilities and residents often wait an unreasonable length of time to receive care, e.g., to be attended to for toileting needs; to be fed; to receive a bath; for pain medication. Since 2008, funding for 2.8 ... hours of care per resident per day has been provided. In that budget year, a promise was made to increase this funding to 4.0 hours per resident per day by 2012. This has not been done; and

“Whereas the training of personal support workers is unregulated and insufficient to provide them with the skills and knowledge to assist residents who are being admitted with higher physical, psychological and emotional needs. Currently, training across the province is varied, inconsistent and under-regulated;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“(1) immediately increase the number of ... hours of nursing and personal care per resident per day to 4.0 hours (as promised in 2008);

“(2) develop a plan to phase in future increases so that the number of ... hours per resident per day of nursing and personal care is 5.0 hours by January 2015;

“(3) establish a licensing body, such as a college, that will develop a process of registration, accreditation and certification for all personal support workers.”

I agree with this petition. I'm going to give it to page Ben to bring to the Clerks' table.

FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Mr. Arthur Potts: In light of the member from Sudbury's member's statement earlier today, I'd to read this petition in the House, addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees access to publicly funded French-language education; and

“Whereas there are more than 1,000 children attending French elementary schools in east Toronto ... and those numbers continue to grow; and

“Whereas there is no French secondary school ... yet in east Toronto, requiring students wishing to continue their” educational “studies in French school boards to travel” up to “two hours every day to attend the closest French secondary school; and...

“Whereas it is well documented that children leave the French-language system for the English-language system between grades 7 and 9 due to the inaccessibility of French-language secondary schools, and that it is also well established that being educated in French at the elementary level is not sufficient to solidify French-language skills for life; and

“Whereas the Ontario government acknowledged in February 2007 that there is an important shortage of French-language schools in all of Toronto and even provided funds to open some secondary schools and yet,

not a single French secondary school has opened in east Toronto; and

“Whereas the commissioner of French-language services stated in a report in June 2011 that ‘... time is running out to address the serious shortage of at least one new French-language school at the secondary level in the eastern part of the city of Toronto’;....

“We, the undersigned,” therefore “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario....

“That the Minister of Education assist one or both French school boards in locating a suitable underutilized school building in east Toronto that may be sold or shared for the purpose of opening a French secondary school ... in the community by September 2015, so that French students have a secondary school close to where they live.”

I agree with this petition, and I leave it with Noam.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I think that we need a couple of French-language schools down in Elgin county, too, but I won't read that petition. Right now, I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly.

“Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

“Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

“Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve.”

I affix my signature to this petition and hand it to the page. Thanks, Jack.

VETERANS

Ms. Cindy Forster: “Lest We Forget Our Duty to Care.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we have a collective duty of care to all veterans for their service and sacrifice; and

“Whereas the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 narrowly defines the term ‘veteran,’ restricting priority access to long-term-care beds to veterans who served prior to 1953; and

“Whereas the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 omits veterans who enlisted after 1953 (modern-day

veterans) from access to priority long-term-care beds; and

“Whereas the current population of modern-day veterans in Ontario is four times that of traditional veterans; and

“Whereas modern-day veterans are not eligible to apply for the existing 1,097 long-term-care beds designated specifically for Ontario veterans; and

“Whereas only one in seven (1 in 7) veterans is eligible for priority long-term care in Ontario, a problem that will only increase as modern-day veterans age in keeping with national demographic trends;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the Long-Term Care Homes Amendment Act (Preference for Veterans), 2015 which extends priority access to long-term-care beds to modern-day veterans, including former officers and former non-commissioned members of the Canadian Forces.”

I support this petition. I will sign it and send it with page Ajay.

LUNG HEALTH

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I have here a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children;

“Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths ... lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

“In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry’s private member’s bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

“Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage.”

I agree with this petition. I’m going to sign it and hand it over to Aaran.

BEER SALES

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a petition with regard to beer sales. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the changes to beer sales in the 2015 provincial budget only allow for grocery stores to qualify in population centres of over 30,000 people;

“Whereas all consumers, including those living in rural and northern Ontario, will pay their share of the new \$100-million-per-year beer tax;

“Whereas many of Ontario’s craft breweries are located in communities of less than 30,000 people—four of which operate in such locations in Parry Sound–Muskoka;

“Whereas access for craft breweries to sell beer in grocery stores will provide the opportunity for increased sales and will support local jobs;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ontario government do away with the 30,000 population restriction so people living in rural and northern Ontario have the opportunity to purchase beer in their local grocery stores.”

Mr. Speaker, I support this petition and will give it to Ben.

SOLAR FARM

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that is being collected by Mrs. Cairin Nelson from Val Therese in my riding. It reads as follows:

“Whereas SkyPower is proposing to clear-cut 70-plus acres of fully forested land in order to erect a ground-mount solar farm....;

“Whereas the proposed site is classified as wetland, and contains a number of species-at-risk ... along with a vast array of other plant and animal life;

“Whereas the proposed site exists between established homes, and among homes which were purchased on the basis of existing land forms; abutting property owners, the GCS planning committee, and the landowners themselves oppose the clearing of a very viable forest in favour of ground-mount photovoltaic cells;

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“Whereas industrial/commercial projects such as the MaxLight ... solar farm belong on already degraded and unpopulated lands, away from residential housing;” which we have lots of in Nickel Belt.

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to: “Stop the MaxLight project ... on Kenneth Drive in Val Therese.”

I will affix my name to this and ask Aislin to bring it to the Clerk.

CONCUSSION

Mr. John Fraser: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the rate of concussions among children and youth has increased significantly from 2003 to 2011, from 466 to 754 per 100,000 for boys, and from 208 to 440 per 100,000 for girls; and

“Whereas hard falls and the use of force, often found in full-contact sports, have been found to be the cause of over half of all hospital visits for pediatric concussions; and

“Whereas the signs and the symptoms of concussions can be difficult to identify unless coaches, mentors, youth and parents have been educated to recognize them; and

“Whereas preventative measures, such as rules around return-to-play for young athletes who have suspected concussions, as well as preventative education and awareness have been found to significantly decrease the danger of serious or fatal injuries; and

“Whereas Bill 39, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to concussions, was introduced in 2012 but never passed; and

“Whereas 49 recommendations to increase awareness, training and education around concussions were made by a jury after the coroner’s inquest into the concussion death of Rowan Stringer;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ontario government review and adopt Rowan’s Law to ensure the safety and health of children and youth athletes across the province.”

I agree with the petition. I am signing it and giving it to page Michelle.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PROTECTING EMPLOYEES’

TIPS ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION DU POURBOIRE DES EMPLOYÉS

Mr. Potts moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 12, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to tips and other gratuities / Projet de loi 12, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d’emploi en ce qui concerne les pourboires et autres gratifications.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I look to the member for Beaches–East York to lead off the debate.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I am absolutely delighted for this opportunity to speak to this bill, my first private member’s bill, and the chance to bring this very important issue forward to the House for third reading and ultimately royal assent and becoming law in Ontario.

At the outset, what I’d like to do is recognize that my mother, again, is in the House. I introduced her earlier. My mother has travelled all the way from Pape and Danforth, where she lives, on the subway, and got off at Queen’s Park and probably walked up here. At 87 years of age, it’s one of those things that keeps her healthy. I’m delighted to see her today.

Interjection.

Mr. Arthur Potts: You’re absolutely right, a gentleman never would, but I’m so proud of my mother. She’s

been such an incredible inspirational support to me over the years. She provides all the support a boy could ever want in life, from nutritional support to intellectual and emotional support, financial support. She’s been an absolutely wonderful feature in my life and I just want to tell the House, through you, Mr. Speaker, that I love her dearly. Thank you so much for being here.

I won’t make the same claims about another guest who is here in the House, Michael Vorobej. Michael is here from Ottawa. He’s travelled a lot further in order to witness this debate. I’ll talk about his interest in this bill a little later on in my comments.

First, what I would like to do is thank the government House leader and the leaders of the opposition and the third party for coming together and bringing forward four very important private members’ bills for discussion today. This is one of those great, unique opportunities we see in this House when the parties do come together on issues that are important to Ontarians. There’s a great sense of consensus around moving these bills forward for the betterment of this province. I want to particularly shout out to the House leaders for getting it right and bringing my bill forward. The other three bills are Bill 33, the Safeguarding our Communities Act; Bill 117, the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Amendment Act; and Bill 141, the Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness, Research and Care Act. These are important initiatives, and it’s tremendous that we can have this opportunity to go forward on them.

I also want to acknowledge the previous member from Beaches–East York, who introduced this particular bill on three different occasions in the past. In 2010, it was Bill 114; in 2012, it was Bill 107; and then in the last session of Parliament in 2013, he introduced Bill 49. This bill had been brought forward three times but hadn’t made its way through the process to become law, and it’s time that we do it.

We shouldn’t be delaying this any further. This is an important piece of legislation that goes to the heart of protecting vulnerable workers and their salaries from being subject to what I would call tip fraud in their places of employment, so I’m very pleased that we had this chance to bring it forward.

Initially, when the bill came forward, it was simply one line: “An employer shall not take any portion of an employee’s tips or other gratuities.” The principle is very clearly established in that line. However, as a piece of substantive legislation that needed to move forward, much work had to be done on it in order to put the substance to it to meet the criteria of what we needed to do.

It went through committee hearings during the last session, and there were a number of amendments made to the bill to create a comprehensive piece, but unfortunately it never made it to third reading or royal assent. Essentially, it died on the order paper when the election was called in May 2014—as all unpassed bills will do.

We faced an election in that period. It was a period when I got a chance to run for the Liberal Party in

Beaches—East York. In the history of where this bill was, I had seen Mr. Prue's comments on it in the past, and I was able, in a public debate at a church in my riding, St. John the Baptist Norway church—which, by the way, is an incredible community hub, an incredible institution that has been around since 1850, bringing community supports. It's one of those churches that will have an all-candidates meeting in every election. Funnily enough, there was only one all-candidates meeting held during that last election—there were the Rogers debates, of course; but in the community, only one. At this one particular opportunity, I got a chance to stand up in the community and say to Mr. Prue that he had been a good member, that he had some good ideas that he wanted to bring forward in this House, and that I particularly liked his tipping bill. I made a commitment at that time, Speaker, that if I should be so lucky as to get elected in Beaches—East York, I would bring that bill back, and that's what we've done. It was a promise I made during the election, and it's a promise that we're keeping today.

The all-candidates meeting, parenthetically, was hosted by Rob Granatstein. Many of you, of course, know Rob from his work for the Toronto Sun, at the Queen's Park bureau. He's a great guy. He lives in my community and is a great community activist. He always seems to chair all of these all-candidates meetings. I play hockey with Rob. Just yesterday, he was chirping at me all through the game, just chirping away—I'm missing this pass, I'm missing that one. He was on the other team, but he's a good guy, and he actually came up to me and said congratulations, not just for the tipping bill, but for getting the winning goal against his team yesterday morning, which I was happy to do.

We are here now with this bill. Coming out of the election in June 2014, when we needed a public member's bill—and the member who had drawn the ballot for that particular day wasn't ready, and I was ready to go because the bill was substantially in a form ready to go forward, and that's what we did.

I would like to thank—there were so many people who contributed to the construction of the bill in the form it came into. The Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association's Tony Elenis and Leslie Smejkal were very helpful in making sure we had some of the pieces right and that there weren't unintended consequences that we couldn't work with. Also, Jamie Rilett from Restaurants Canada, who appeared at the committee hearings here, was extremely helpful. In my own community, a number of people, including Steve Mastoras from Whistler's restaurant, which is at Broadview and Mortimer—he lives in my riding, although his restaurant is not; it's in Toronto—Danforth. Steve came to me, with a group of restaurateurs, with some concerns about the way the bill was initially framed. I'm pleased to say that Steve—who has a tremendously popular restaurant in the community, where they have free jazz on Saturdays—is now, I think, fully supportive of what we're trying to do here.

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Likewise with Tom Zoras: Tom owns a place called Jawny Bakers, which is in my community, at St. Clair

and O'Connor. It is the private haunt of all the people from Parkview Hills, who go there on a regular basis. I met with Tom on the bill and I know he, too, is very supportive of what we're doing here.

I also had a chance to meet at some length with the Burlington Restaurant Association and with the member from Burlington, who might have a chance to say a few remarks to this bill—if I don't go on too long—a little later in the afternoon. We met with her association in her riding, and they had some interesting concerns they wanted to bring forward, particularly about how we were dealing with credit card sales and the fees charged on credit cards that are attached to the payment associated with tips.

We made amendments this time around—just the one amendment—that we would have an opportunity to create regulations that would exempt certain holdbacks an employer could do, particularly only on that piece of a credit card transaction that has a fee charged. That way, an employer would not be, in a sense, subsidizing the tips received by the employees who worked for them. When you think about a 2.5% charge on a credit card fee to a \$10 tip, it's what, 25 cents? It's not a lot of money to the employee. But in a large restaurant, over the course of a year, it is a lot of money, and in a restaurant industry with razor-thin margins, it was important that we gave them that opportunity to do it.

We talked a little bit about some of the provisions in the bill. At first, there was that simple principle—and I think that principle continues to be recognized throughout what we have here—but the most important thing, I think, is that we put a definition in as to what a tip or gratuity would be. Essentially, the definition says “what a reasonable person would infer.” If a customer was leaving an amount of money at a table, they are inferring that that money is going to go to those people who made their service so spectacular. That's the important piece: “what a reasonable person would infer.”

It works both if you give that money to the employee who was doing the serving or if you were to give that money to the employer, anticipating that it would be distributed. But also, there's a section for if it's given in any other way, including a service charge. Some banquet halls, as you know, will charge a flat rate service charge across the board, and that is anticipated, as part of that service charge, to be distributed amongst those who contributed to the service experience.

Another section creates an enforceable provision where a tip that has been taken away inappropriately by the employer from its employee is considered a wage for the purposes of getting it back. This is important because, under the Employment Standards Act, there is an exemption that tips and gratuities are not considered wages, and that speaks to the fact that waiters and servers typically get less than the minimum wage and they expect to make up additional money. Tips are not included as wages; however, in order to have an enforcement proceedings which will allow them to get the money back, it has to come back in as wages. That is picked up in the second section of the bill.

There is also an area which speaks to enforcement orders. Quite often, under, maybe, the Family Responsibility Office, which is probably the most common, if a person's wages are being garnished, the employer is required by a statute of Ontario or Canada or an order of the court in order to withhold, and tips for that purpose are included as an opportunity to be withheld.

The other big piece that I think that this bill did, which was so important, is that it protected what is known as tip pooling. Typically, we will leave a tip for the server. At the server's discretion, in some restaurants, they may portion out a piece of that to the person who is busing tables or the bartender or the people in the back who did the cooking or the cleaning, or even the hostess. Tip pooling became a methodology where an establishment could establish a certain percentage. If they gathered \$1,000, so much would go to the cook, so much would go to the bartenders and to the hostess—you can tip-pool it and divide it out. But, unfortunately, what we started to see happening is that some employers were pooling the tips and then taking a flat margin off the very top. That's primarily the thing we're going after here, where the tips are pooled and then people aren't getting back as much as they would have otherwise expected.

The bill also exempts working owners. I've had a lot of concern from small restaurants particularly, where someone has learned to cook, or their friends are saying, "You're a great cook," and they go out there and they create a small restaurant where they do the cooking in the back of the house, or they are doing the serving at the front of the house, or maybe their spouse is doing the serving, and they might have one or two employees as well.

Imagine the situation where the owners are completely prohibited—these are people who are actually providing the service, who are contributing to it. The bill is very clear that anyone in the situation—whether they're a shareholder, an equity holder, the owner or a stockholder, they have a chance to share in the tip pool if they are in fact doing the work, contributing to the service. It's very important that this not become some kind of loophole in the bill, that the owner seats one person early in the day and now considers himself to be able to share in the pool. This is about a fair and proportionate disbursement of those tip poolings, commensurate with the kind of job that they have done.

There's another piece in here which is very important, around collective agreements. As you know, I have a background in labour management relations. I consider a collective agreement a sacrosanct document. You don't go into a collective agreement and change the rules and conditions in collective bargaining agreements that have been freely entered into by the parties. This bill, in essence, exempts collective agreements that are currently in place. But it then makes a mechanism to ensure that a collective agreement that is renewed or is entered into after this bill comes into force must comply with the rules and regulations.

Why it's very important for me to raise this point is that my guest here, Michael Vorobej from Ottawa, works

in a unionized setting with a collective agreement in his place of employment. As he has shared with us publicly before, they have a collective bargaining agreement which specifies that the employees are only sharing 68%, I believe it is, of the tips that are provided, and I guess the house is getting the remainder. That will continue for this period of time, until the end of that collective agreement, but in the renewal stage they will have to re-negotiate between the parties a new sharing arrangement between the tips and the salaries that they are being paid. How they work that out, we will leave up to the collective bargaining process.

But what's important about the bill with respect to his situation and the unionized employment situation is that his firm is in competition with other banquet halls nearby who simply put the 15% in. They're a non-union environment. Management take all that money against their bottom line, and they pay their employees something in excess of the minimum wage. They are then allowed to offer services to customers at much less than the establishment where he works, because of this unfair tipping arrangement. This will outlaw that practice and put that banquet hall that's unionized on a level playing field with others in the neighbourhood who are not operating in a way I would call open and transparent.

This has been a great week for me, last week coming into this week, around this bill. Today, for the first time, I was scrummed in full media style, with five or six cameras pointed at me, reporters with their microphones, all asking about this bill and where it was going and why it was necessary. Earlier this afternoon, I had an interview with CP24, with my good friend Stephen LeDrew. I ran Stephen LeDrew's campaign for mayor years ago, and I think he has kept me off the show because—

Ms. Cindy Forster: How did he make out?

Mr. Arthur Potts: It was a very successful campaign, yes. We got the word out.

I haven't been on his show much: the day after I was elected, and now today. We had a good interview.

I've been interviewed by the Star and the Post and all the regulars, and appeared in the Ottawa Citizen and on CBC Radio's Metro Morning.

What's really interesting about this is that it's tough, usually, to get good-news stories out into the press. We all know the adage that you don't sell newspapers writing about planes that land safely. They're always looking for disasters and crises.

For us and for this bill to be getting this kind of positive reaction in an environment of the Auditor General's report and a whole bunch of other things that are happening out in the world politically is, I think, an extremely good sign that we're on to something, and we're on to something that's extremely important.

I'm going to leave it there, Speaker. I know I spoke a little longer than I was anticipating to. I know some of my members, such as from Burlington, will have some remarks to make later on. Thank you very much for this opportunity. I appreciate the support of all members in moving this bill forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It gives me great pleasure to stand here on behalf of Patrick Brown, our leader, and the PC caucus.

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I would also like to talk about my mother for a minute; she's not here in the gallery. She and my father are in their 89th year—still going strong—and certainly have helped me out in the past. Now, whenever I go over there, when I get home on the weekends, the questions I get are always interesting. One of the most frequent questions I get from my father about being an MPP is, "How can you stand to sit in there and listen to that?" I say, "Well, it's an interesting job."

This bill is certainly something that our party is supporting. It takes me back 40-some years ago—I don't want to date myself too much—but I actually met my wife in a restaurant. She was waitressing, and I was just out of school. She was 17 years old at the time.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: How much did you tip her?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'm getting to that.

I was working across the street at a trucking company at that time, and went over to the restaurant—it was like a gas bar and restaurant combination in Listowel. I sat down, and one of my favourite sandwiches—it still is one of my favourite sandwiches—is a bit unusual. I asked her to prepare me a toasted bacon and peanut butter sandwich.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Eeew!

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Oh, you've got to try it. You have to try it. It's a sandwich that was actually invented by my mother. At least I think it was invented by my mother; she kept feeding it to us, anyway. It's an incredible experience to get a peanut butter and tomato sandwich. But of course you can imagine the reaction I got when I sat down and ordered this, because it wasn't on the menu. She didn't know what to charge me, and she thought I was almost totally out of my mind eating something like that. So she didn't know what kind of guy I was.

As things progressed and we got to know each other, on my off days from my other job I got to work at this same gas station. I would pump gas, and she would work in the restaurant. One of the things I noticed was how hard she worked. She was not only responsible for taking orders in the restaurant—it was only a small restaurant; there were only a couple of tables and a few bar stools—but she also did the cooking, and at the end of her shift, at the end of the night, she would also clean the utensils and whatever else and get it ready for the next day, because we both worked after school. I worked after I got my job done at the company I worked at across the road.

I noticed how hard she worked in there, and at the end of a shift. She would be really tired, and she'd be dirty from cleaning the grills and whatever else they used at the restaurant. That's about the first time I had ever experienced tipping. I was just out of school; I hadn't

been a tipper at all. But every once in a while, somebody would leave her a quarter or a dime or whatever it was back then, and I got to thinking that was pretty good. It was kind of nice, because people appreciated her work. They appreciated how hard she worked, and certainly they appreciated her personality—my wife has a bubbly personality, and they appreciated her coming up to them and saying, "It's nice that you came here today. What can I get you?"

As things went on, the tips would get a little bigger every once in a while, and she was allowed to keep the tips at that time. She didn't have to pool them. That all went into her pocket. It wasn't a lot of money by today's standards, but she would go home with—I don't know—\$4 or \$5 a night in tips. At that time, I think we were both making a \$1.25 an hour, so it goes back quite a few years.

Getting back to the tipping part, who gave the better tips? I kind of think she got the better end of the deal, and she thinks she got the better end of the deal. We've been together for 43 years now, so obviously that bacon and tomato sandwich had no effect on how she regarded me, because I'm still eating them and she still doesn't. She won't eat the peanut butter and tomato sandwiches.

I think this bill was first introduced by Mr. Prue a number of years ago when he was a member here for the NDP, and it's a bill that I believe puts some fairness into the tipping program that a lot of employers use. A tip is a voluntary thing by patrons of a restaurant or bar or whatever, that if they think you've done a good job, and they like you, then certainly people are more than willing to leave you a few extra dollars for your service.

I have also seen where in some restaurants a cup is used and all the tips get thrown in a cup. I was a little concerned; I didn't know who got what at that time. I was speaking to a person I knew who was in the service industry at a restaurant and they said that at their place it was divided up into thirds: The employer got a third of the gratuities, the waitress would get a third and the rest of it was divided up with the kitchen staff.

As I spoke before, I saw how my wife worked hard in the kitchen, especially when it came to cleaning the kitchen after she was done her shift. It seemed to me at that time that it wasn't fair, that there could have been a little bit more fairness involved if the kitchen staff, who certainly worked hard and fast—in many cases they have multiple orders to get done—in my opinion, maybe should have had a little bit bigger share of those tips.

I remember a restaurant we were in a number of years ago where there were some issues about the tipping. The owner of the restaurant's opinion was that the tips had to get higher so that their staff would make more money. I said to her at that time that maybe a pay raise would help her staff too. She said, "No, that's not how we do things around here. We want our staff to work hard, we want them to impress our customers and then their tipping level goes up." I had a little bit of an issue with her opinion, too, but that's the way she wanted to do things.

I think withholding tips or gratuities on the whim of an employer certainly isn't, and wasn't, a good thing; and

this bill certainly addresses that. It says also that an employer may withhold tips if a statute of Ontario or of Canada or a court order authorizes it, or the employer collects and redistributes the tips amongst all or some of the employers and other employees. That's certainly a part of the bill that needed to be in there. That's a section of the bill that certainly protects those that may have a court order to pay money to their spouse, or in those situations.

So I think that there are many good parts to the bill, and certainly this is something that was addressed a number of years ago and was brought to the forefront by the member opposite from Beaches—East York. I'm glad to see that there are members of the service industry here today to hear this debate, and as the member opposite had said, it's nice that all parties are getting together on this bill and agreeing with it so its speedy passage will be ensured.

I remember years ago, as I said, when I was first introduced to tipping and I first started to tip. We weren't making much money back then—I think our wages were \$1 or \$2 an hour for what we were doing—and a tip was a lot of money. What we were expected to give in tips maybe was only quarters or dimes, or maybe 50 cents at a time, but it meant a lot to us, because the wages we were making at that time weren't a lot. These days, when you have a percentage, it may be a fairer way of doing it. I know I tip by percentage all the time, and some restaurants or establishments have that built into their prices.

1400

It's interesting. My wife, and I speak about her again, won't do that; she will not leave a tip in percentages. She always has to put cash on the table. That's the way she prefers to do things. She'll figure it all out as to whether it's a 10% or a 15% tip and she will count it all out and put it on the table. That's what she is used to doing. I said to her one time, "You know, we could get up from the table and there could be somebody there that maybe just reaches over and grabs some of that and nobody has seen it." She said, "Well, I have a remedy for that." What she does is she actually puts it under her plate so that nobody can see it. That's the way she does things.

Tipping is something that's handled differently in other countries. I was reading about places that actually don't even allow tipping because of a cultural issue. It's something that culturally is not accepted. Places like China and Japan, I believe, are like that. They don't believe that tipping is something that should be allowed, but that's a cultural thing. And actually, there are countries over in Europe that ban tipping—countries like France and Switzerland, I believe, and Belgium. Service charges are included on the bills and the servers are simply making higher hourly rates. So that's how they handle this issue.

I'm sure all of us will be celebrating Christmas dinners in the holiday season, and Hanukkah dinners, and you will know that the food preparation is certainly a big part of our celebrations. We'll probably put on a few

pounds, I would think, during the holiday season. You will have seen your parents and any of those who have been involved in the food preparation for those celebrations, how hard they work. It's not only preparing the food that takes an enormous amount of time, but it's the dishes and whatever else after the dinners are over.

I would think it would be easy to imagine somebody working in a restaurant situation like that, although I know it's split up, maybe, from what it used to be. When things get busy and you have to have clean dishes ready to go—if your restaurant is busy or your bar is busy, you have to have these things done. The more that your staff can do this and is capable of doing things like this, making sure that your customers are happy—as a customer, you see that too. Things might be terribly busy, but you see that the servers are working their hardest, and that means that they have a backup staff in the kitchen—a backup staff cooking or cleaning or whatever they're doing—so that they bring your food out properly, that it's properly done and your utensils are clean and your dishes are clean. You know how hard they're working. The employers need to make sure that tips are divided properly, that everybody receives what they should. That gives the employees an incentive to work hard, and work harder as they go on.

I'm sure that for many of us who have been to our favourite restaurants, the reason they are our favourite restaurants is because of the service we get and it's because we know that things are done properly. The attitude in the establishment is good and people seem happy to serve you. So it's only fair—everybody has to be part of a team, and if one part of the team is not working properly, it affects everybody else. If everybody is doing their job and people are happy with the service, happy with the food or whatever else they're getting in the establishment, certainly the tips probably will be a little higher, and also it will bring you back. So every part of the team has to work hard, and therefore it's my belief that everybody should share in the proceeds from that. That's certainly something that I see in this bill, in how it should be divided up.

You know, not everybody is happy with legislation that's passed in this place. I've certainly been advised that you can't please everybody, and if you try to do that, it will drive you nuts. Certainly, there may be detractors from this bill, but I haven't heard any yet.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Wait until you hear from me.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I guess I'm going to hear it from the third party.

What I've heard from most people is that they're happy, for the most part, with what is in this bill, and that it should help solve some of the problems, if there are any, in the establishments they work in.

When I get back to those days when I first met my wife and how hard she worked and what she earned at that time, and how things have kind of changed or progressed since those days—I guess I should use the word "progressed"—there have always been people who would take advantage of a situation, and I think that has

happened in the past. Hopefully this bill will stop some of that, and will make division of the proceeds more fairly done. And if it's not being done, there are certain ways it can be corrected.

I will end by saying that I want to congratulate the member opposite for bringing this bill forward again. As I said before, it was something that was proposed by the NDP a couple of years ago, by Mr. Prue. It has been a while getting back onto the books, and I want to congratulate him for his efforts. With that, Mr. Speaker, I'll end.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's always a pleasure to rise in the Legislature to speak on behalf of New Democrats. Today I'll speak on behalf of Michael Prue as well, the former member from Beaches–East York, who spent four or five years of his life travelling this province talking to workers in the hospitality industry as well as hairdressers, cosmetologists—you name it; anybody in the service industry. Michael was out talking to them to determine how they were actually being ripped off, in many cases, by their employers, by having to either give up their tips altogether or share their tips with employers and managers.

For 13 years, actually, he collected that information, and he raised that bill here in the Legislature three times. The last time he raised it, he talked about the third time being lucky. Unfortunately, it didn't pass that time either.

Servers have complained bitterly to us over the years about having to give up up to 4% of their hard-earned tips to bosses. In some instances we heard here today, people in banquet halls are giving up 15% to 18% of gratuities to the owners of banquet halls and getting nothing in return for that.

We talk about credit card fees: Even before this bill, credit card fees, debit card fees, sometimes uniforms, and broken glass and dishes were actually being charged back to employees out of their tips across this province, those things being a 100% writeoff for businesses. Owners of hospitality companies and hairdressing shops can write those costs off their gross revenue, dollar for dollar, but they still want to bill that back to the lowest-paid workers in this province, who, as servers, make \$9.55 at the low end and \$11 at the top end. I heard the member from Beaches–East York speak about that today in the restaurant industry—perhaps 2.25%; I've read somewhere as high as 5%. But when you add that up, if you have an employee who works five days a week and they lose, say, \$3 every day to pay that service charge, that's \$800 a year to the lowest-paid workers in this province. If it's 5%, it could be as much as \$1,500 at the end of the year coming off of the income of those low-paid workers.

1410

In committee, the member from Beaches–East York actually proposed an amendment, and that amendment actually guts, in my view—that and a second amendment that I'll talk to—Michael Prue's former bill. I was really surprised to have to get up here today. I thought the bill

that was introduced and tabled I think two or three days after the member from Beaches–East York was elected was actually going to be Michael Prue's bill, but it isn't.

There are two fundamental changes in that bill that we certainly disagree with. One is the fact that collective agreements must expire before the actual legislation will apply to workers. Say we're in an collective agreement that is in a three-year term. That means three years from now, this legislation will apply. When the member from Beaches–East York speaks to this and how this is fair, well, I can tell you, in my experience in labour across this province, the Employment Standards Act supersedes collective agreements unless they're better. In every situation that I've ever been involved in during negotiations, if the ESA is better, then it applies; if the collective agreement is better, then it applies, and I don't know why it should be any different in this particular situation for the lowest-paid workers in this province.

The second piece is the amendment that Mr. Potts, the member from Beaches–East York, brought through. When he was standing at that debate during the election campaign, I'm sure he didn't tell the people who were listening to that debate that he was going to gut this bill so that they ended up having to pay 2.5% to 5% of credit card and debit card fees off their paycheques, and that would actually be reducing their tips. It won't apply to cash tips, but, in fact, who carries cash anymore? I can tell you, being from a caucus where a number of our members are 40 and under, they never have any money; they have a bank card. They carry a bank card; they carry a Visa card. The new generation does not carry cash. So I would say that, 90% of the time, workers in this province are going to be having their end result income impacted by this particular amendment.

I don't understand, frankly, why the member from Beaches–East York put this amendment forward. The bill was unanimously passed by this House a couple of times over the last five or six years, and there was no reason to actually have to put this amendment in.

I know that some of you—maybe all of you have worked in the restaurant industry or worked for a banquet facility to put yourself through college or university. Some of you may even own a restaurant or be part owner in a restaurant and understand how hard people in the service industry actually work. Do you know how hard it is to carry one of those trays with 50 beers on it, or huge trays of food—the number of injuries that occur in that sector?

So we certainly disagree with those amendments. At the end of the day, we're going to support this bill, only because it will provide some improvements for workers in this province, but this loophole is really problematic to me, it's problematic to members of our caucus and it's problematic to many of the people who work as hairdressers, who work in the restaurant or bar industry in this province. We've heard from them already. They're very concerned that, just like in the past where unscrupulous employers or managers were taking all of the tips or a good percentage of the tips of the workers, now

the same people may try to make the employees pay for the 2.5% to 5% banking fee on the entire bill, so then they'll be going home with maybe \$20 a night less or \$50 a night less, depending on what kind of restaurant you're working in, whether it's a high-end restaurant where a bill could be as much as \$1,000.

It is problematic for us, having those amendments there, and I really don't understand why this couldn't just have been a simple process where we put forward the former member from Beaches–East York's bill and moved on it.

In committee, Mr. Singh, who is the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, raised the issue: Does this in any way create a grey area? We heard from legislative counsel, and he said that the effect is to provide an additional regulatory method of prescribing methods of payment that would not be included in the definition of "tip" or "gratuity."

Clearly, what the member from Beaches–East York was attempting to do was to reduce the wages of those people who work in the industry at their expense as opposed to at the employer's expense.

I also wanted to speak briefly to some comments from the member from Thornhill, who was supporting this amendment on this basis: "I think that we have to look at servers, in a way, as small business people: They're running their own business, and in a way, they should be thankful that their tips are going on the restaurant's credit card machine. Otherwise, they would have to maintain their own account" and actually pay those fees themselves. These people who work as servers, work as wait staff, work as hairdressers, are not independent contractors under the Labour Relations Act in any way. They're employees and they shouldn't have to be bearing the expenses of employers in any way.

I just wanted to briefly talk about the minimum wages. These people working in these industries make \$11 an hour; \$9.55 for the servers. We heard from hundreds of people over the last four years who told the committee that the mandatory minimum was 2% to 5% of sales before taxes were actually paid out of the house, regardless of the size of tip that was left. We know that in many of these banquet facilities, much of the tips were going back to either the owners of the banquet facilities or the managers, in some cases.

There are four other provinces here in this country that already prohibit an employer from withholding tips or other gratuities, those being Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland. Although this bill seems to focus solely on restaurants, it can also affect taxi companies, spas and hairdressers.

As I said, Michael Prue introduced this three times; it's being introduced for the fourth time. But it took six years to get there. I have to wonder why a bill as simple as this couldn't have been a government bill that was passed through this Legislature at some point but had to become a private member's bill.

We have to look at the fact that this is going to give employees some protection, but it certainly isn't the

protection that we assumed they were going to get. It appears to undo the protections that were contemplated by the former member from Beaches–East York, which was his intent in putting forward this bill. It certainly raises the fact that with these changes, there will be a serious loophole and a potential to undermine what could have been some good legislation. This is an accountability moment that again shines light on the government being something other than it advertised, Mr. Speaker.

I wanted to talk about a woman who we heard from time and time again, back in 2013 and 2014, who worked in a restaurant and said that in some weeks her employer took \$52 from her tips. She said that in one particular week—it was a horrible week—they were understaffed. The money was not forthcoming because the service wasn't as good. People were getting up and actually leaving the restaurant because they didn't have enough wait staff to actually work it. And at the end of the day, the employers took \$52 out of her wages. Multiply that by 52 weeks and see how much money that is, actually, at the end of the day.

1420

We heard from hundreds and hundreds of people. We heard from some employers who really were not interested in moving forward with this bill because it was going to perhaps affect their bottom line at the end of the day. I think, when you work in the service industry, you sometimes expect not to earn top dollars, but you don't expect to be humiliated at your workplace by then having your tips taken away from you. We really never heard from one group of people that ever was opposed to sharing their tips with the kitchen staff, with the cooks, with the hostess, but certainly we heard from many that were opposed to sharing with their managers or with their employers.

So, at the end of the day, while this bill will give some protections to the workers in this province, clearly the member from Beaches–East York has left a huge loophole there that is going to affect the bottom line of the lowest-paid workers in this province. I am going to reiterate one more time that this was never the intent of Michael Prue's bill. This bill actually belongs to the current member from Beaches–East York. I'm sure that, over the coming years, if he doesn't fix this loophole, he will be getting thousands of calls from workers in this province.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this issue. I'll save a few minutes for my colleagues.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I'm pleased to rise in the House today to speak to Bill 12. I'd like to thank my colleague the member from Beaches–East York for bringing forward this legislation. I'd like, in particular, to thank him for his protection of Ontarians who work in the industry. I know he cares about them a great deal. I'd also like to thank him for advancing the idea that many hands are involved in the wonderful service we receive and the meals we enjoy. As such, it is important that we

promote the equitable distribution of tips and gratuities amongst all restaurant staff.

We're very fortunate in this province: We have a terrific hospitality industry with dedicated staff and innovative owners offering us best-in-class service and cuisine. Whether it's those who excel at food preparation in the kitchen, those who serve us with a smile, or those who manage the day-to-day operations of busy bars and restaurants, staff are well trained, enthusiastic and highly qualified. They have to be, given the highly competitive nature of the industry.

I'm proud to say, Speaker, that I was once part of this industry, although it was many years ago. As a young woman, I was a server and a bartender in a restaurant. It helped me pay for my education. I learned a great deal working in restaurants and bars. In fact, many of the skills I learned then serve me well today.

Indeed, many young Ontarians seek out part-time employment in restaurants and bars, a lot of them when they are enrolled in school full-time. The industry is one that can accommodate flexible hours, and, as such, is perfectly suited to students. In fact, I have a young member of my own family who works in the industry now. My niece Erin, who lives in Burlington, will graduate this fall with a degree in business administration from the University of Guelph with a specialization in the food service and hospitality industry. As such, I have a personal stake. I want to be sure that the industry where she has chosen to work remains robust and fair.

When it comes to dining out, Ontarians have come to expect excellent service. They understand that qualified employees are sometimes paid a lower wage because tipping is expected. Tipping for service is common in our society. However, those patrons also expect that 100% of the tips they give will be provided to those who were involved in the serving process, whether that be through pooling or other fair practices. They are not wrong in this assumption, because these employees work hard, they provide an excellent product, and they are deserving of receiving 100% of their tips because they have earned it.

We here in Ontario believe that hard work should be rewarded, and Bill 12 seeks to do just that: to reward hard-working and skilled Ontarians in order to increase their take-home pay. Providing financial stability creates a healthier economy, a healthy workforce and a healthy Ontario.

Closer to home, I've met with restaurant owners in my riding of Burlington about Bill 12. In fact, on a recent occasion when we met to discuss a variety of issues, I was pleased to have the member for Beaches–East York in my riding. He met with the members of the Burlington Restaurant Association. They talked about Bill 12 and their support for the legislation. We also heard from them about the importance of fair business practices like those outlined in the bill.

Whether it's the front of the house, the back of the house, service or management, employers understand the benefit of ensuring that all their employees are treated fairly and receiving the earnings that directly reflect the

hard work and energy that they put into their workplace on a daily basis.

I'd like to again thank my colleague for Beaches–East York for bringing forward this important piece of legislation. Having worked in the industry many years ago, as I mentioned, I can attest to how difficult it can be to earn a living when you rely on tips, so I'm pleased to add my support and to help protect those who do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm pleased to be able to stand and speak to this bill today.

I spent many years, as a young woman, in the hospitality industry, and I was able to do that because of the tips that I brought in to support myself and my daughter. Knowing that I could always count on that money was an important piece for me because I had tips coming into my house daily to pay for those extra things, to pay for the daily bread, to pay for the daily milk and things that were necessary on a regular basis. I made less money as a waitress than I would have if I had worked in another position with a full-time wage.

Today we know that servers are making \$9.55 an hour. They have no benefits, no pensions, nothing to hold them back up when, later in life, their shoulders are killing them and they have carpal tunnel from carrying those trays. There's nothing that's in legislation to protect these workers. So when the previous member for Beaches–East York introduced me to this bill, I was absolutely excited, knowing that waitresses were going to have some kind of protection in the hospitality industry.

When the new member for Beaches–East York tabled this bill again, of course I was saddened that it wasn't our member, Michael Prue, who was bringing it forward, but I was happy to see the bill come forward.

Through the committee portion, the member tabled the amendment to the bill. I was in awe that here we're putting forward a bill to protect our hospitality industry and to protect workers who are doing the job, and now there is going to be this whole grey mass in the middle of it about them having to cover the cost of their own transaction fees, when, quite frankly, it's the cost of doing business for a restaurant; it's the cost of doing business in the hospitality world.

Like I said, Speaker, they're making less wages, they're taking all the impact on their body—and I'm telling you, that's on the legs; that's on the feet; that's on the arms. A lot of physical work goes into hospitality, at a lesser wage. Now we're going to cloud the waters. We're going to get right back in there and say, "We're going to charge you for the cost of doing business, which is through that Interac machine or through that credit card machine." Who's to say that the owner isn't then going to say, "Well, you're paying 3% on the entire bill and not just on your portion"? We know we've had unscrupulous owners before. That's why we have this bill before us: because they would take it all. Who is going to be the protection? Who is going to be the oversight of our workers once again? This has just, unfortunately, clouded this entire bill, when I was so excited to see that there

was going to be some protection for the hospitality workers.

I will be supporting the bill because it does do a good portion. But because it stops and it creates a law that they can't take the entire portion of their bill, of their tips—it really creates this whole grey mass in the middle of it, of, “Is it 3% on this? Is it 3% on that? Where's the 3% coming from? How am I making the calculations? Who's going to ensure that the calculations are right? Who is going to ensure that the manager or the boss isn't going to be taking the 3% off the entire bill?”

1430

There are just so many things that have now clouded this really great piece of legislation. This is one of those times when a one-line bill really does make sense. The amendments that were brought forward, I think, hurt the intent of the bill. They have taken away the spirit in which it was brought forward and, I think, have just created that grey cloud.

There are other pieces: Yes, there should BE the tip-out to the kitchen, to the hostess staff; that's all great stuff, because we know that the people in the back doing the dishes are working hard for \$11 an hour, and we need to make sure that they're taken care of.

Like I said, Speaker, I will be supporting this bill, but I'm saddened that it has been gutted.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I would like to take this opportunity to introduce people who have come to Queen's Park today for my bill, which is up next. So I'm using my two minutes and 44 seconds to do this.

We have Pat Cliche from the North Bay and Area Community Drug Strategy, Tom Robertson and Brad Reaume from the North Bay Police Service and Curtis Latimer, the owner-pharmacist of Shoppers Drug Mart.

These are people who told me they will be here: Jennifer Sicard, pharmacist, from Medical Pharmacies; Rhowna Martin, formerly of North Bay, now of London, with the CCSA; Chris Auger, OPP; Mark Barnes from Ottawa; Laurie Hicks from Sarnia; Detective Mike Howell from Sarnia; Detective Sergeant Kevin Magee from Halton; Detective Constable Clayton Gillis from Halton; Stephanie Cowle from the Ontario Injury Prevention Resource Centre; Sherri Dolk from Barrie; Gaetano Fabbri from Barrie; and Dora Hobbs from Barrie.

As I say, Speaker, they are here or have told me they will be here for my Bill 33, which is coming up in about one minute and 30 seconds.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We welcome our guests to the Legislature.

Further debate?

Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 26, 2015, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Potts has moved third reading of Bill 12, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to tips and other gratuities. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

SAFEGUARDING OUR COMMUNITIES

ACT (PATCH FOR PATCH RETURN POLICY), 2015

LOI DE 2015 POUR PROTÉGER NOS COLLECTIVITÉS (POLITIQUE D'ÉCHANGE DE TIMBRES)

Mr. Fedeli moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 33, An Act to reduce the abuse of fentanyl patches and other controlled substance patches / Projet de loi 33, Loi visant à réduire l'abus de timbres de fentanyl et d'autres timbres de substances désignées.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Nipissing.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Again, I'd like to say welcome to the guests, who have come from North Bay and other communities throughout Ontario. I am so pleased to speak to third and final reading of Bill 33, An Act to reduce the abuse of fentanyl patches and other controlled substance patches.

Speaker, I'd like to begin by reiterating something I have said since the first day I arrived here at Queen's Park: It is my firm belief that any time we can do something in this House that can literally save lives, we should be doing that. This happened in our first couple of years here, when we debated the Hawkins Gignac Act on carbon monoxide detectors, which is now law and saving lives. Speaker, Bill 33, the Safeguarding our Communities Act, will do likewise.

Since the last time we debated this in this Legislature, there is further evidence to support that statement. From 2007 to the advent of the Patch for Patch program, which was pioneered in my hometown, fentanyl was a major factor in at least two deaths a year in my hometown of North Bay. Since the partners in our community implemented Patch for Patch and decided that enough was enough, we've gone over a year without a confirmed fentanyl-related death in North Bay. This program is working and it will save lives across the province, as it has done in my city of North Bay.

I have to say that this is not my bill. This comes from the hard-working folks in my hometown. I am simply moving forward legislation province-wide of a solution that was developed by these good people in North Bay. As I have mentioned earlier, we are joined here today by some of the folks who pioneered the Patch for Patch program that has had so much success in curbing the trend of abuse.

I would like to mention a few, Speaker: a lifelong friend of mine, Pat Cliche of the North Bay anti-drug strategy, is here today; and North Bay police detective constables Brad Reaume and Tom Robertson are here

today, and I say welcome again. Welcome to you, and thank you. And all the others who are here and who have contributed: We appreciate that.

I want to take a moment and thank a couple of other key people who have made this possible. My executive assistant, Clint Thomas, who toiled so diligently for the last 16 months to see that this gets here today: From the administrative and technical side, I say thank you to Clint for doing that. Carlene Variyan of Indivior, thank you for the background and the service that you have performed to our province. And I want to say thank you to Bradley Warden, the legislative counsel who actually drafted this bill.

These things don't just happen by accident. These are the men and women, many times behind the scenes, who made this. So again, Speaker, I say to you that this is not my bill; I'm just the vessel bringing this today. That is the way I feel about this.

Let's take a moment and talk about fentanyl, because, for some, this may be the first time you hear it; for others, you may be very close to the tragedy that it brings to families. It's an opioid narcotic, a prescription drug that's generally used for cancer patients in severe pain. Fentanyl is 50 to 100 times more potent than heroin, oxycodone or morphine. Canada ranks second in per capita opioid use, and Ontario ranks first in Canada.

For people 25 to 34, one out of every eight deaths were related to opioid use. That's a 2010 statistic, and we know that it has been skyrocketing since then. But this is an interesting fact: Fentanyl is the third-leading cause of accidental deaths. Speaker, that's more than double the number of accidental deaths caused in motor vehicle accidents. That's how prevalent this is. The abuse of fentanyl is a growing and dangerous trend in Ontario, across Canada and across North America.

Here's how we got to where we are today. In North Bay and area, between 2007 and 2013, there were 14 fentanyl-related deaths in my hometown. As a result of the high price of fentanyl, crime—break-and-enters, thefts, prescription forgeries and prostitution—was on the rise.

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This issue peaked in 2009. The members of the North Bay Police Service I mentioned earlier, along with our coroner and our medical officer of health, issued a public advisory about the risks of fentanyl misuse.

This is a story that I took from BC Global News: In 2013, North Bay Police Service conducted an undercover operation targeting trafficking of controlled prescription drugs such as fentanyl. In the project, numerous arrests were made, and many charges were laid as well. The most commonly abused form of fentanyl in North Bay is what's called the transdermal fentanyl patch. The cost of a 100-microgram fentanyl patch in North Bay, then, ran between \$400 and \$500 on the street. As a result of the cost, fentanyl patches are most often purchased in pieces. A person could purchase a quarter of a fentanyl patch for \$100, back then. The medication on a fentanyl patch is not evenly distributed, and that one-quarter piece a

person purchases and is going to consume could contain a significant amount—in fact, maybe all—of the fentanyl on that patch, without the person knowing it. If the person has not built up a tolerance to opiates, it is most likely that the fentanyl will have a lethal effect.

I listened to Tom Robertson from the North Bay Police Service. He tells a story from 2013, where he and his partner, Brad Reaume, were out on patrol and were parked on the side of the road. One of the local drug abusers in our community walked up to their vehicle, knocked on the window and said, "You guys have to do something about this fentanyl. It's killing all my friends." They approached Pat Cliche, who I introduced a couple of times already, and others at the drug strategy committee in North Bay. With them, they approached the doctors and pharmacists, some of whom are here today, and explained what was happening in North Bay. When they told them about the Patch for Patch idea, which we'll get to, they basically said, "This is a no-brainer."

In the months following second reading of Bill 33, awareness of the problem seemed to mushroom across the country. You literally could not open a newspaper without reading a story on fentanyl. Maclean's magazine did a cover story on fentanyl and talked about Bill 33.

In August, a large theft of fentanyl patches from a vehicle in Toronto prompted a public warning from the Toronto police. Inspector Howie Page said, at the time, regarding passage of this legislation, "That would be a great bonus in helping the police, in helping with the safety of the community, so we are hoping that bill gets final consent."

In North Bay alone, as I've said, at least 15 deaths have been linked to fentanyl in recent years. One death is too many; 15 in one town of 54,000 people is a number that this Legislature cannot, with any measure of conscience, ignore.

Fentanyl is a powerful pain medication that is sold in small patches via prescription. Like any opioid, it is prone to abuse. The patches are cut up and sold illicitly to addicts who have found ways to smoke, ingest or inject it. When this program began, a full patch was going, as I mentioned, for \$400 on the street. Today, it's up to \$600 or more.

We're seeing an impact on our streets, and it's impacting our police services and our resources. Not only are there serious health considerations, but the sale of these patches is empowering criminal elements in communities across the province—in fact, across our country—straining our police resources. Our local partners now tell us that counterfeit patches are becoming a concern, and our doctors, pharmacists and police are continuing to work on ways to address that issue.

The Ontario College of Pharmacists notes in the winter 2015 edition of their publication *Pharmacy Connection* that the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police is leading the Patch 4 Patch Initiative. It also notes that the Ontario College of Pharmacists and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario both support initiatives that curb opioid use, including participation in the Patch 4 Patch program.

Dr. Kieran Moore writes, “As president of the Kingston Academy of Medicine, I am supportive of this bill. The Patch 4 Patch Initiative is an important step in reducing deaths from accidental fentanyl overdoses, which have more than doubled in Ontario since 2008.”

I can go on and on about these letters of support, but let’s just talk for a little bit then—what is this Bill 33 that was developed in North Bay? What is a patch-for-patch policy? Bill 33 would require a person prescribing fentanyl patches to record on the prescription the name and location of the pharmacy that will fill the prescription and to notify the pharmacy about the prescription. It also sets out various rules that apply to persons who dispense fentanyl patches, including a requirement that a new fentanyl patch may only be dispensed if the dispenser collects a used fentanyl patch from the patient or his or her authorized representative, ergo the name “patch for patch.” Bring your old, used patch back, and you get new patches.

It would also authorize the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations.

Basically, here’s how patch-for-patch has been working in many cities and why it needs to be legislated across the province: This policy was, as I mentioned, developed in partnership with local doctors and pharmacists, and it stipulates that in order for patients to get a new fentanyl patch, they have to return the old one intact. It’s pretty simple. Pat Cliche and others can tell you that it has had a positive effect in our community.

At last count, 45 Ontario communities had either implemented or are looking at implementing a patch-for-patch solution.

In Guelph, the Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy produced a super informational video on the problem of fentanyl abuse last fall as part of their program launch. Other communities to get on board include Windsor, Peterborough, Sault Ste. Marie, St. Thomas, Sudbury, Timmins and Muskoka.

Speaker, if you go to the new website, patch4patch.com, not only can you see all of these videos, including the great video produced in North Bay—a series of videos produced in North Bay—you will get a full understanding of the magnitude of this issue across our communities, across Ontario and, indeed, right across the country, including Maclean’s magazine. Again, it’s that critical that our national magazine did a front page story on it.

Right now, patch-for-patch is being done on a voluntary basis, community by community. If you’ll pardon the pun, it’s done in a patchwork solution. The problem is this: So long as a person has a means of transportation to get to a community without a patch-for-patch policy, they can still continue this chain of abuse. That’s why it is important to take this locally produced solution and have a province-wide solution, and why we’ve brought this bill forward on their behalf.

There are several other reasons to do this: It’s to generate public education and awareness regarding fentanyl abuse and misuse, and to guarantee responsible provision of this potentially deadly drug.

It’s to address proper disposal of fentanyl patches to avoid harm to others. There are drug dealers who sell used fentanyl patches because there are still drugs inside that patch. That’s why we want them returned: to address an identified increase in associated crime in communities. Increases have been seen in the number of overdoses and mortality rates. And it’s not just fatal; it’s also non-fatal sicknesses that come from this. This will help the significant amount of medical resources these cases use.

The benefits of doing this are plentiful, Speaker: partnerships with law enforcement, physicians and pharmacists to ensure proper return and disposal of fentanyl patches. We see an anticipated reduction in accidental and non-accidental overdoses from fentanyl. Again, a comprehensive evaluation is currently under way in North Bay.

This will limit the trafficking of fentanyl because you’re limiting the supply. The long-term goal will be to eliminate the return of counterfeit fentanyl patches and other issues around fentanyl use.

Reduction of the amount of fentanyl on our streets will assist local police, as investigations require significant time and substantial police resources to build cases against those with a legitimate prescription. This will assist local efforts to develop public education and awareness programs with various community partners—the benefits seen from sharing best practices among numerous areas of the province.

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This bill provides a flexible response for both the government and regulatory oversight bodies to determine if professional conduct standards are being adhered to, and to determine what, if any, action is required if they aren’t. It gives the minister the power to make regulations to deal with a variety of issues that may arise.

Speaking of the minister, I would like to say thank you to Minister Eric Hoskins for his recognition of the serious problem of fentanyl abuse. I have spoken with him about this, and I really do appreciate his attention. I appreciated the professional, courteous way that the minister’s staff and the ministry worked with us through the committee stage on this legislation, which was crafted to give the flexibility to make regulations, as seen fit by the minister, in consultation with all the various stakeholders. We may not always see eye to eye, but we have found common ground to work together here, and I’m so grateful that we were able to do that.

Speaker, before I close, I want to read you the same message that I read on second reading of this bill more than a year ago. This is a letter I received from Sherry Albert of New Liskeard—sadly, she couldn’t be here today. She contacted me after I introduced Bill 33 last fall and wrote the following:

“Dear Sir,

“I am writing to express my gratitude for your undertaking of this initiative. In 2011, I lost my 19-year-old son to this tragic abuse of medication. He was a gentle young man with many plans, who was at the wrong place

at the wrong time and, as many others, did not know the dangers of prescription medication. The police determined that the patch was sold to his friend for \$100.

"Since May 2011, I have heard of at least four more senseless fentanyl-related deaths in our very small community. I, too, am afraid for our youth.

"I would like to extend my offer to support this program by sharing my story with whomever cares enough to listen. My life has been forever changed and my heart eternally broken by the loss caused by this serious problem in our area."

A very touching letter from Sherry.

Speaker, I believe the approach advocated in Bill 33, which has already produced positive results in North Bay, is a model that will curb the dangerous and growing trend of fentanyl abuse across Ontario. This bill is about saving lives and helping the most vulnerable people in Ontario. Remember the words of Sherry Albert and try to put yourself in her shoes.

I would encourage all members of all parties in the House today to support this locally generated Bill 33 so we can start combatting fentanyl abuse and its terrible consequences, and so Ontario can be a positive model for others to follow.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to speak today to Bill 33, An Act to reduce the abuse of fentanyl patches and other controlled substance patches. I know that the member from Nipissing thanked his community and all the work that has been done there, and members, legislative counsel and the minister. I would, in particular, like to thank him. Yes, you are the vessel that brought it forward, but somebody needs to do that in this Legislature. We're at our best when we're working together here to give expression to those things that are really important to families in our communities, and this is one of those things. So I want to congratulate you on that effort, and I will be supporting the bill.

Addiction affects all of our communities. Opioid addiction, in particular, is very tragic. I know the member from Nepean-Carleton has in one particular community in her riding, Manotick, a really serious challenge with their youth. We all do. But, in particular, there were some very tragic consequences that came out of that. In my own riding, I have one family who I've gotten to know very well. Their child, who is an adult now, is still alive, but their lives are profoundly affected and forever changed.

It's not only death that can really affect families, but losing one's child to an addiction that they can't control, that changes them incredibly, is really a very difficult thing. I'm glad to hear that the bill is an expression of what came out of some local decision-making, a community-building exercise, where people came together in a community-based initiative to say, "This is what we need to do to get a handle on this problem that we have."

I want to congratulate the community of North Bay and all the people who work across the province to tackle

this. I know that in our community of Ottawa, I've had the good fortune to work with a number of people in the addictions community, namely around a few programs like the Step program—drug counselling and addictions treatment that we have in every high school and upper elementary school in Ottawa—which is a partnership between public health, the Ministry of Health, the boards of education and, at one time, the United Way as well. It has produced great results. It is called the Step program. It really has a positive impact, not only in preventing addiction and recognizing that, but it also provides some treatment.

We had a real challenge in our community with youth addictions, as many communities do, and at the time we were very eager to build residential spaces. But there was actually a realization inside the community that they needed to work together to try and prevent these addictions from happening. I'm very proud to be part of that. The results, as well, in terms of kids staying in school and graduating are really quite incredible. It is called the Step program. I encourage people to take a look at that for your communities too.

I'd be remiss if I didn't have a chance to mention this one individual in our community, Dave Smith, who's been a leader in addictions as a volunteer. He runs the Dave Smith centre. I happened to be at Recovery Day again this year, where they honoured him. He's done some great work on youth addictions. I want to just mention that here in the Legislature again and congratulate him for that. I'm very pleased to be able to work with him.

The patch-for-patch program: You're right. I'm sure that when it first got mentioned, this made sense. It's a no-brainer. But as we know, sometimes it's a challenge to move through these things in as fast a way as we would like to. I'd like to again congratulate the ministry and the minister and the member from Nipissing for working together. I've taken a look at the bill and some of the changes that came through committee; there was a lot of work that went into that. I think that has to be commended as well.

From the act in 2010, we have established the narcotics management system. With all the things that we can do around controlling and managing things, we're still going to have a challenge inside our community. That is going to take not just government; it's going to take communities coming together to address these problems. We have to do more to prevent and to create awareness around the dangers that are there, especially with young people and their families.

So as I said, I'm very pleased to support this bill. I want to congratulate the member again and thank all the people who put all the hard work into bringing this bill forward, and I look forward to seeing the bill pass.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm very pleased to be able to stand here on behalf of my constituents in Oshawa and

speak to Bill 33, An Act to reduce the abuse of fentanyl patches and other controlled substance patches.

I would like to start out by further recognizing those who have come to appreciate the debate today, and certainly those who have been part of what started as a local initiative and has continued on. And here we are, ensuring that it has far-reaching provincial impact. Thank you very much for the work that you do on a regular basis across our communities.

I will extend that appreciation to not just those of you who are here but to the pharmacists and doctors, addiction centre support workers, certainly our law enforcement—our police—our health care professionals, and our community leaders who are coming together to ensure that we can strengthen and keep our communities safe.

Anything that we can do to make the illegal use of this highly potent opioid is a benefit, and I'm pleased to speak to this as my party's critic for community safety and correctional services. As we know, across our communities the needs vary. People across our communities struggle. Sometimes they struggle in the margins, and sometimes they struggle in our doorways and our corners, but they are members of our community. In Oshawa, we have many programs that support the needs and do their best to minimize harm and damaging effects on our community at large and individuals in particular, whether they are education programs or safe needle programs or exchange programs—sometimes meeting with push-back, but ultimately our community benefits from a safer and more understanding community.

In our constituency offices, I'm sure that we all can recognize that oftentimes when our constituents and our neighbours come through our doors, they often come with complex needs. Sometimes those are mental health needs, and sometimes those are needs involving addictions. One of our constituents and neighbours comes on a somewhat regular basis into our constituency office. She is a member of our community, but she is, more specifically, a member of our drug use community. She is wrestling with her own challenges, but one of the things she's brought to our office as being a real concern, as we have already heard today, is that members of her immediate community, also other drug users, are dying in front of her. She has significant concern, and of course we're seeing it broadly across the community as well. But it is a terrifying thing that needs to be addressed.

We've already heard some background today about fentanyl, but I'm going to go ahead anyway. Fentanyl is a prescription painkiller that is 100 times more powerful than morphine, prescribed to people dealing with significant pain, such as cancer patients and those in palliative care. It is extremely dangerous for prescription drug abusers. Opioid abuse is a serious public health issue that accounts for one in eight deaths among people aged 25 to 34 in Ontario. Fentanyl is generally prescribed, as we've heard, as a transdermal patch, with each patch containing three days' worth of medication. It's an opioid, like OxyContin. However, OxyContin is

less readily available on the street because of a tamper-proof formula, and the government has delisted the medication from the Ontario Drug Benefit Program. So it just goes to show that when we come together and get involved, we can have an impact.

Though fentanyl is intended for cancer and palliative care patients, the patches are being diverted for street sale, as we've heard, with new patches selling for up to \$500 each. Even used patches have a value on the street. Used and unused patches are finding their way onto our streets and into our children's hands. They can come out of medicine cabinets. They can also be created and mixed in garages, which unfortunately is not something that we can sort out and fix here in this Legislature, but we certainly can be part of the solution.

Interestingly, as we have already heard from the member from Nipissing—and I will commend him for all of his initiatives on this issue—this is an issue that has come up and really been brought to the fore in North Bay, but Oshawa has also been on board. Police in our community look to communities such as North Bay and Peterborough for a solution. They have successfully implemented a Patch for Patch program. Durham, actually, is the fourth community in Ontario to introduce the program and the first in the GTA.

I have a quote here from Paul McGary, Lakeridge's director of mental health services and the Pinewood Centre. He said, "When we realized that the number of opioid-related overdoses has increased by 50% in the last year and with the number of deaths Durham Regional Police have been experiencing, we recognized very clearly that every single overdose that is averted is a huge advantage and every single death we can prevent is in itself worth this entire initiative." I think that everyone in this room can appreciate that.

So this Patch for Patch exchange program, really, as we have heard, is a team effort among prescribers, pharmacists, police, our addiction centre support workers and health workers and, really, it's been a journey to get to this bill. Some parts of that journey have been heart-breaking—as we have talked about. I'm optimistic that this will have such a positive impact.

The Opioid Patch Return Program in Durham—if I can take a moment and explain a little bit about that—is a collaboration, as I said, between physicians, pharmacists and patients to promote the safe, effective and responsible use of fentanyl and other transdermal opioid patches. As we've talked about the specifics, this Patch for Patch program will limit prescriptions, and really is a fundamental exchange—a used patch returned for a new patch—but also, pharmacists have a system for drug disposal, which is a key piece to this.

Another part of this program is the next steps for educating patients. I'm looking at the bottom here—I've got documents from Lakeridge Health and the Durham Region Opioid Patch Return Program Guidelines and I'm struck by the fact that at the bottom of these documents it says "adapted from North Bay Drug Strategy" and "adapted from Peterborough County-City Health Unit."

That really does speak to the fact that this particular bill has been a collaborative effort and is going to have far-ranging impact.

I've heard of some success that we have had in Durham. We have had some success with these clinics and pharmacies that have come on board. I've heard of a pharmacist who has questioned or challenged a person who wasn't returning the patches and that individual admitted that they did, indeed, have a problem. They were able to get that individual the help that they needed. I think we are going to hear many more success stories, Speaker.

I think, though, that this is part of a broader conversation, as well. I think this is an important part in starting that conversation about prescribing and over-prescribing, when we look at responsible prescribing, whether it is our doctors and our dentists, and really looking at how we put prescriptions out into the public.

Medication return programs and their accessibility, especially for our seniors—I've seen my grandmother's medicine cabinet and I know that she is still holding on to a number of things that should probably be disposed of in a safe way.

I think that this entire debate speaks to the fact that when we all work together across the community, we really can strengthen our communities and make them safer. As we've said, patches are not the only place to get fentanyl, but we, collectively, have the opportunity to be part of the solution.

So again I will recognize all of those who work hard every day in our community to keep all members of our community safe. When we see a problem or a danger, we should work together to design a solution. Thank you for the work that you've done to this point.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am very happy to have the opportunity to speak in support of this bill. I have to say that listening to the debate takes me back to when I first learned about the importance of understanding the abuse of prescription drugs. I thought I'd take a moment just to share that with the House today.

We are blessed, in London, to have a police officer by the name of Lorna Bruce. Lorna works with sex trade workers in London and is a remarkable, remarkable human being. I thought that I needed to learn a little bit more about the challenges these women are facing, so I asked Lorna if I could go on a ride-along with her. I did that, and those few hours changed my life.

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I saw first-hand—in fact, I met a woman who got in the car with us. This is a woman who had a serious prescription drug addiction; she was addicted to OxyContin. She had, just months earlier, been living in the suburbs. She drove a minivan, she had kids, she had her own business. She had injured her back, and her doctor prescribed OxyContin for her. She got addicted to OxyContin, and piece by piece, her old life fell apart. She lost her family,

she lost her business and she lost her home. She was turning tricks in old east London to feed her addiction.

It was a really sobering time for me because it became clear that it was the health care system that had let her down: Her physician had prescribed drugs; pharmacists had dispensed drugs. The system was—we were even paying for the drugs that she had become addicted to. We dropped her off, and I said to Lorna—I tell you, it was a pretty emotional moment. I said, “We have to do something. What is going on?” It was before I became Minister of Health. I started to get information about the prevalence of OxyContin addiction at that time. And as was said earlier, that's a different story now, but addiction is addiction. People who have addictions will find a way to feed their addiction. That's the way it goes.

While we have made significant changes on delisting OxyContin and allowing only the tamper-proof formulations of it, we knew there was more to do. That's why I introduced back in 2010 the Narcotics Safety and Awareness Act, which resulted in the narcotics management system. What we heard as I talked to people—talked to pharmacists, talked to people who had family members who had died from drug overdoses—I became aware that the system was, in fact, letting people down. People were going to multiple doctors to get prescriptions filled; they were going to multiple pharmacies to get the prescriptions dispensed, and nobody was actually looking at the whole picture.

Now we do know who the prescriber was, who the dispenser was, who the patient is, and we are able to put a flag up on the pharmacist's screen when someone goes to fill a drug. In fact, I know this works because I was with a family member who was going to get a prescription refilled because he was going away, and a flag went up and they said, “We can't fill this because it is not time yet.” That was kind of one of those moments where you realize that what you're doing is making a difference. We had to work through that.

The important point is, we have to be responsible. We have to take responsibility for our system. This is another step forward in preventing people from—I'm not going to say it is going to prevent addiction, because we all know that one step alone will not prevent an addiction, but it will flag issues and it will flag concerns. I just want to commend the member for this legislation. I will be happily supporting it.

I just want to say to family members who have really opened their hearts to conversations like the story you read, who have overcome, I think, a lot of concerns about their own privacy to talk about the importance of taking action—I want to say thank you to people who have stood up and said to us that we have to do better. We don't want to lose any more loved ones in our communities because of addiction to drugs.

Thank you to the member from Nipissing for bringing this forward and to all the members who will support this. And to the people in the audience who are here today, especially, thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I, too, want to congratulate the member from Nipissing for bringing this bill forward. Everybody here is an MPP; we are leaders in our community. But the real leaders are people, like the people of North Bay, who realized that they had an issue in their community; they had a problem in their community. They got together and they found a solution. People from law enforcement, pharmacy, mental health workers—they reached out to their MPP and, together, they brought us something that—is it going to change the world? Of course not. But is it going to take a significant step in the right direction? Absolutely.

We've been talking about fentanyl for a good part of this afternoon. This is a much-needed medication for a lot of people. We've talked about people living with cancer—some cancers can be really, really painful—but there's all sorts of other incidents and accidents that happen to people where they have to manage their pain. Certainly, fentanyl is not a first-line pain management drug, but it is something that you may have to get to. For a lot of people, it is a life-changer because they are able to get their pain under control. They will be able to go on with their lives. They will be able to go to work, go to school, and continue to do their activities and daily living. It is a life-changer for the people for which it is legitimately prescribed.

But then comes, first, accidental use. Fentanyl is one of those drugs that can kill with one usage. One patch in the wrong hands, one patch that's left behind for a little kid to hold on to, to put their fingers into and put their fingers in their mouth, and that kid may die. It has happened in Ontario. It has happened with pets that have gone for a tasty treat in the garbage can and the fentanyl patch was there also, and the pet died. The dog certainly did not go after the fentanyl patch; he went after chicken bones, as it happens to be, but the end result was the same.

The potency of this drug, if your system is not used to it, is—actually, we don't really know why it has such a depressing effect on your respiratory system, but it does. It suddenly depresses your respiratory system, which means you basically forget to breathe, and that happens accidentally. But it is also a drug of choice for many people that have a drug addiction. The problems, then, that North Bay got together to solve is a problem that is found in every single community in northern Ontario.

I just went through the Sudbury Star, which is the paper in my community. I will read to you really quickly:

"Selling two fentanyl patches to an undercover police officer has earned a Greater Sudbury man a one-year prison term." That's for Christopher Morin.

"Forged Prescriptions Land Pair in Court: A stolen doctor's prescription pad used to obtain bogus fentanyl patch prescriptions" has led two people to jail—Candace Wrigley, 24.

"Fentanyl Pusher Will Serve Year and a Half in Jail: A Val Caron man found with a large quantity of fentanyl patches last April will serve 18 months in jail." That was Kyle Donoghue. He was 22.

"Drug Trafficker Dealt Year of House Arrest"—for nine fentanyl patches with a street value of about \$3,500 in my community. That was Mr. Courtemanche.

Then: "Sudbury Dealer 'Peddling Death,' Judge Says: Clayton Wilson was looking at a jail term" of 90 days served on weekends. Clayton works for Xstrata Nickel, one of the big companies, but he was what was called a mid-level dealer because of the quantity of fentanyl patches that he was selling.

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Then: "Judge Takes Hard Line on Fentanyl Possession: 'The message has to be sent that this drug is very dangerous,' Justice Martin Lambert told Timothy Clark," before sending him to jail.

"Drugs, Cash Seized in Bust": A search warrant was executed in Azilda, which is in my riding, and they located fentanyl patches. A 28-year-old man and a 24-year-old female trafficking a controlled substance: fentanyl patches.

"Sudbury Judge Warns Druggie's Roommates": That's Stephen Konikow, who was found with two half-portions of a 100-microgram fentanyl patch cut into strips to be sold.

"Dealer Was Supposed to Stay Away From Sudbury": Mr. Orville Buckley from Mississauga was supposed to stay out of Sudbury; he came back to sell fentanyl in Sudbury.

"Pair Guilty of Robbery": Jean-Claude Breton, 30 years old, and Ashley Labonte, 26 years old—why were they committing break and enters? Because she wanted to buy fentanyl patches.

Here we have a chef who peddled poison. Jason Martin is a cook. Same thing: one count of fentanyl trafficking.

"Dealer Will Spend Nine More Months in Jail": His name is Mazur. He's 27 years old. A warrant was sent for his residence; it turned up nine 100-milligram fentanyl patches worth \$4,000.

"Drugged driver 'dies' in crash....": Michel Savage—actually, he didn't die. That was more of a headline than anything. "Michel Savage's decision to smoke a fentanyl patch, then drive a car with his four-year-old daughter along as a passenger, almost cost him his life...." The judge said, "You are ... lucky to be here today in this courtroom," because he passed out after smoking the fentanyl patch while he was driving, but the first responders were able to revive him.

"Drug Addict Gets Nine Months Jail for Theft": That's Ryan Gervais. Ryan went on to say that fentanyl was destroying his life. He is 24 years old.

"Another Bad Cheque Passer Pleads Guilty": This is Vanessa Mills, also 24 years old, using a fake medical prescription pad to prescribe herself some fentanyl.

"Two Women Caught in Drug Bust": That's Melanie Makinson and Vanessa Mills, 28 years old and 23 years old. They pleaded guilty. They were also selling fentanyl.

A Brampton dealer is awaiting sentencing in Sudbury for possession of fentanyl.

A Sudbury woman was dragged by a car after being hit by Chad Joudry.

I'm reading all of those. I have pages and pages, and those only go back a couple of weeks. Every single week in Sudbury Jail, in Sudbury court, there are people being prosecuted for the use of fentanyl.

Some of the accidents that they cause—here we have: “Ontario Court Justice Andrew Buttazoni dealt with Michel Savage, a Sudbury man involved in a single motor vehicle collision. He had to be revived by cardiopulmonary resuscitation,” because he had used fentanyl and passed out.

“Yesterday ... another driver,” also in the same court—the judge goes on to say that something has to be done about this; how can he have two identical accidents in his courtroom one after another? Because they're using fentanyl.

The list goes on. I wanted to mention how prevalent this is. The patch-for-patch and everything else that is in that bill will be a significant step to making sure that people who do need this medication do get access to it. But the people who want to gain access to it—we make it more and more difficult to feed their addiction. Don't get me wrong. As everybody else has said, we're not going to cure addiction because we don't make this drug available as freely as it is now. In Sudbury right now, it is pretty easy to buy fentanyl on the street just about anywhere. A lot of the patches that are being sold are used patches.

I must tell you that my mother-in-law was in a retirement home, and the number of people in that retirement home who are on fentanyl is horrendous; but the number of people who go through those garbage cans is just as horrendous, because there are lots of fentanyl patches. Whenever you use one a day, once you use it, you dispose of it. Even if it's an old one, it can still be used. They make tea, they smoke it or they ingest it. You can use it in ways that are very easy for people. You don't need to inject it. You can, as I said, smoke it, roll it, eat it, drink it, and it is just as potent as it is when you use it on the patch.

Let's celebrate the great work that North Bay has done. They have brought that to us. It will change for the better the rest of the province. You can be extremely proud of what you have done. I know that it's not easy to bring an idea to fruition, but you have done it. Celebrate your victory. A lot of people owe you a lot of thank yous. Thank you for coming to Queen's Park. You've done great work.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: It's a pleasure to join in. It's a festive time of the year and it's also a time of the year in the House when we're able to come together as individual members to address initiatives brought forth by individual members. It gives me great pleasure to add my comments to a colleague whom I've had the privilege of being able to get to know over the last four years, the member from Nipissing. Abusing some of the conventions in the House, I'd like to, in a flattering way, point

out the good work of Mr. Vic Fedeli and to assure him that I, too, will be supporting this.

I just have a few short comments to add to the debate. Many of the things that I feel have been said and many more things that I didn't even know about the issue have been said. This is a good start. It's a product-specific exemption, which I think the member knows. It allows the Ministry of Health to say, “Let's have a look at this. Let's see whether or not this approach of patch-for-patch produces the results that we need.” If it needs to be amended, then there is scope in the bill, as I understand it, to expand it, amend it, change it, bend it, morph it; and, if it proves to have worth, make it do things that at the outset we may not be able to foresee.

I have two last comments on it. From time to time, I have the opportunity to meet with some of our peers in state Legislatures in the United States, particularly the northeast. The last time I attended such a gathering where the states presented their reports, the issues that they felt dominated them, the first thing that about half the states said was, opioid abuse and heroin addiction. They said them both in the same context. You hear it once and you think, “Oh, well, interesting”; you hear it twice and you go, “Wow, what an unfortunate coincidence”; but by the time you've heard it three and four times, you say to yourself, “This is really a serious problem.” In the context of simply coming up with a solution, I have to commend the member and say: Well done.

The last comment I have to make is that some 30 years ago, I worked for a data processing firm. We had an office and a software development arm out in Saskatchewan. One of the things they developed and that I understand is still in use in pharmacies in Saskatchewan is measures to detect double-doctoring, going to multiple pharmacies and whatnot. The technology to go a long way to detect people who are coming in with a problem who need help actually does exist and is a mature software application running on an IBM mainframe, if it's still running on that. Perhaps it's something that, along with the measures proposed by the member, we could consider here in Ontario, as we move forward in our own reforms in pharmacy, to put that in. What was a technological challenge 30 years ago is an order of magnitude simpler today—one of the few things I think is. So although the member sort of dances around it, this is something that I think would enhance his bill.

1530

I'm hoping that as time goes on, we gain some experience in dealing with the measures proposed—hopefully, if passed—enacted and gain some experience with their use. We'll have an opportunity to say, “Is this the only way to do it or are there other things we can do to enhance the patch-for-patch aspect of it?”

To my colleague from Nipissing: Well done. Merry Christmas. You can count on my vote.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Fedeli has moved third reading of Bill 33, An Act to reduce the abuse of fentanyl patches and other

controlled substance patches. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

PROVINCIAL ADVOCATE
FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH
AMENDMENT ACT, 2015
LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR L'INTERVENANT PROVINCIAL
EN FAVEUR DES ENFANTS
ET DES JEUNES

Miss Taylor moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 117, An Act to amend the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Act, 2007 with respect to notices of serious bodily harm or death / *Projet de loi 117, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur l'intervenant provincial en faveur des enfants et des jeunes en ce qui concerne les avis de décès ou de blessures graves.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Hamilton Mountain has the floor to lead off the debate.

Miss Monique Taylor: I'd like to start with some introductions. Chris York, Pamela York, Brett Smart and Evelyn Salt, thank you for being here for third reading of this very important bill, Bill 117.

It is my great honour to rise today for third reading of my private member's bill, Bill 117, An Act to amend the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Act, 2007 with respect to notices of serious bodily harm or death. I would first like to acknowledge and thank the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, Irwin Elman, who I know would have liked to have been here today. Irwin continues to be an amazing voice for children and youth in Ontario, and I'm proud to be able to work alongside his office in all of his important work.

I'm sure I can speak for Irwin in saying that this day has been a long time coming. The advocate has been asking for access to this information since he was appointed in 2008. I am happy we were able to work together to make this happen.

Secondly, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to making this bill a reality, including but not limited to all of the families who have and who continue to reach out to my office about these issues; front-line children and youth workers across the province; the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth; my executive assistant—and my right arm, quite frankly—Norm MacAskill; our caucus researcher, Karalena McLean; and the drafters of this bill at legislative counsel for all of their hard work on this very important issue.

The concept of this bill is quite simple. The bill ensures that the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth will be informed of a death or serious injury of a child in care. This bill corrects the serious issue of our

advocate having to learn about deaths or injuries in care through the news in the same process that the public does. As the advocate noted in his last annual report: "We are the only advocate's office in Canada with restricted access to information concerning incidents involving serious harm or death to children in our mandate. This must change."

Unfortunately, we know all too well that death and serious injuries of children and youth in care are all too common in Ontario. Since 2009, 57 children have died in less than 12 months after a case with the children's aid society has been closed. If that's not terrible enough, combine that with the number of children who have died while it was an open file with the children's aid society, and the number climbs to more than 500. That's between 90 to 120 deaths each year—about one death every three days.

I'm sure we can all agree that even one serious injury or death of a child in care is too many. My bill is merely one step in making Ontario a better place for children and youth in Ontario.

In the wake of the Katelynn Sampson inquest, the passage of this bill is also quite timely. Often, children cannot speak for themselves, and it is our duty as elected officials to ensure that children, particularly vulnerable or marginalized youth in care, have a voice at that table. As MPPs, we must make sure children have their voices heard in every decision we make about them.

We learned last week that children in care in Ontario are still at risk of being placed in homes with people who have been convicted of child abuse because the Ontario Child Abuse Register is not being checked. Thirteen years after the death of Jeffrey Baldwin, we continue to place children with convicted child abusers. This is unacceptable.

Ontario is taking an average of seven months to complete abuse investigations when the guideline is 30 days—again, unacceptable. In more than one third of investigations reviewed, safety assessments to identify immediate safety threats to children were either not conducted or not conducted on time. We need leadership for children in care immediately. We must ensure they are protected; we must ensure they are safe.

Part of ensuring that children who typically do not have a voice are heard is by giving advocates, like the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, access to the information he needs to do his job effectively.

I will mention that after public hearings, we put forward a few amendments on this bill and they were voted down by the government. One of the amendments was to ensure that the advocate is getting information unredacted. This is important because, as his office says, children shouldn't be invisible in their death. When the provincial advocate doesn't get full information, children become invisible.

We know that when the office of the provincial advocate has access to children and youth, the impacts are powerful. For example, the provincial advocate recently released his report from his listening tour wherein he

spoke to more than 400 children in care. There were six major themes that emerged from his tour. They are: (1) we are vulnerable; (2) we are isolated; (3) we are left out of our lives; (4) no one is really there for us; (5) care and services are unpredictable; and (6) we keep losing who we are. That was First Nations youth.

I want to highlight for everyone in this House some quotes from the advocate's recent publication from his listening tour for children in care. Speaker, I read these quotes in hopes that we can take politics out of this issue and simply listen to the words children have to say about their experience in care. These quotes come from different children in care. I ask for every member's attention while I read these quotes:

"If I'm alone with my stepdad, I would hide in my room because I'm afraid of him."

"My friend took her own life because she was not getting the help she needed, like counselling or settlement services."

"My stepdad is homophobic and I have a lot of friends who are gay and bisexual. I can't really say anything because he had told me myself to burn in hell—no one will ever love you."

"They make it sound so easy. They're like 'oh, people should just adopt kids more often.' Nobody really wants a teenager. If they are going to adopt a kid they're looking for an adorable, little baby that's so precious and hasn't been affected by life and anyone else. And that baby can be their child. When they're teenagers and already have their own issues, they don't really want all that baggage."

"When I came here I was at home and my worker came and offered me to come here. I asked them before I came 'what is the place about?' They told me it had good educational supports.... I got really excited. Then my worker dumped me off here and I never saw her again...."

"Once you turn 18, it's weird because to CAS, you are an adult but it's like what do you do on your own? It's worrisome. How do you pay bills? Just all ... I don't know."

"I find that when you are an aboriginal going to public school or Catholic school, they try to push you into special education."

1540

Speaker, there is no doubt in my mind that these are all sobering quotes for all of us to hear in this House. We need to acknowledge that things can and should be better than they are for kids in care. Every one of us in this House would agree that our priority should always be to ensure that our children, particularly our most vulnerable and marginalized, feel safe in care in and out of our province.

I want to mention the second amendment we put forward that the government voted against. Our amendment echoed concerns raised by the provincial advocate, the association of children's aid societies and UNICEF about the narrow scope of the bill. Our amendment would have broadened the scope to include all children under the mandate of the advocate, including youth in justice

facilities, youth with mental health issues, and children and youth with disabilities who are placed in residential care.

I have to be honest, Speaker: While I appreciate that the government brought this bill forward today as part of a package deal in passing bills, I have to say that I really don't understand their rationale behind denying the advocate information about some of our most vulnerable youth. It just doesn't make sense.

Using the reasoning that some of these children and youth have parents who can advocate for them is, frankly, quite unacceptable and unconvincing. If these kids have parents, the provincial advocate doesn't need to be notified if a child or youth is seriously injured or dies. I want to make that clear: If a kid has parents, the provincial advocate doesn't need to be notified if a youth is seriously injured or dies. It just doesn't make sense, Speaker.

I'm truly disappointed that the government did not support this amendment. I'm disappointed, because the government promised to be progressive on these issues, promised to be so much more. I hope that, in the future, the government will rethink this decision for the sake and, quite frankly, the respect of vulnerable kids.

My bill is merely one step in making Ontario a better place for all children and youth, but there are many more steps that can be taken, particularly for indigenous youth. As many people in this House may be aware, we have more indigenous children in care than at the height of the residential school era. Speaker, I have to repeat that again, because I want make sure that everybody in this House hears this: We have more indigenous children and youth in care than at the height of the residential school era.

Speaker, how can that possibly make sense? How is it possible that we could have more children in care because their families can't support them and because they are so troubled in the life that they are being given than during the Sixties Scoop? It blows me away when I hear those numbers, when I realize what that actually means to aboriginal families in our province and in our country. It is absolutely devastating.

Indigenous children and youth in Ontario deserve access to culturally appropriate care. In the words of one youth in care, "Pain that is not transformed is transmitted."

We need transformational leadership and strong political will on this file. We need to ensure that aboriginal families are consulted. We need to ensure that First Nations people and the new designated CASs have their voices at the table when it comes to directives that their agencies are going to have to follow. We need to ensure that they have the community and cultural support to ensure that they are able to bring their children into the world that they see fit; not that the Minister of Children and Youth Services sees fit, but that the aboriginal culture sees fit in this province.

We've talked about different things that have been going on with CPIN and with new computer systems that

are being brought into our children's aid societies, and yet the new aboriginal-designated societies have had no input whatsoever into what CPIN means for them and what that's going to do. Quite frankly, Speaker, who's going to pay for it? The aboriginal societies still have no idea how that's going to roll out. It's very concerning.

When I met with First Nations a couple of weeks back, they had serious concerns about the cultural teachings. Where is the funding to ensure that they're keeping kids at home with families and not taking them away to children's aid societies, and to make sure that they're getting the appropriate cultural care that they see fit? It's a major part of the system and it's something that needs to be looked at.

Speaker, I'm going to take a few minutes here and give grace to children whom we have lost recently in care, to just bring light to their voices and to the young lives that were lost so early—and quite carelessly, frankly—and the hope that this bill will move forward and will change some of the ways that the systems are being directed and what that will mean for children in care. Hopefully, we will not lose any more children in care due to negligence.

This is for poor Katelynn, who wrote, "I am A awful girl that's why know one wants me," 62 times before her death; for Kody, who had parents to advocate for him but was still placed with an individual with a history of child abuse; for Jeffrey, whose name we frequently reference in terms of "never again," but similar cases continue to happen.

For all children who have been taken from us way too soon and have been invisible in death: We can do better. We should do better. We have to do better. We will do better.

To borrow a phrase, "Courage my friends, 'tis not too late to build a better world."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I'm proud to rise in the House today on behalf of my constituents in Cambridge and North Dumfries township. I want to say hello to all those who are watching today from home.

I also want to commend the member from Hamilton Mountain for bringing this bill forward. I know that this is an issue of child safety. Child protection is an issue that all of us really care deeply about. It's a very good thing to have a debate in the House over this subject today. I wanted to, again, commend not only the member but those who have come today to listen to the debate and to talk about this very important issue in our community.

I know that the member's bill, Bill 117, the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Amendment Act, 2015, is in its third reading. I know that it's of great importance to me. Not only have I spoken about it in second reading here in the House, but as a member of the Standing Committee on Social Policy, I was able to examine it more thoroughly in committee, when we debated it there and crafted what's in front of us today.

Mr. Speaker, it's also of great importance to me personally and in my career as a nurse. I know that I have

said in the House today and at other times that I started my long career as a nurse at the Hospital for Sick Children. I was a 21-year-old—that was a few years back—starting in the medical program. I was nursing babies and toddlers under the age of four, mostly the young ones. I can tell you, as a young 21-year-old, the kinds of cases, patients and care that I was responsible for at such a young age really affected me lifelong.

One thing that we were responsible for was really looking after some of the most vulnerable children, the vulnerable citizens in our society. A lot of these children, I think, as the member from Hamilton Mountain has said several times, didn't have a voice. If they didn't have parents or advocates or workers from CAS who would look after their interests, it was left to us, as young nurses, to try and provide care for these children.

1550

Our government is committed to ensuring the protection of Ontario's children and, in cases where a child dies in care, determining the cause of such deaths with a goal of avoiding future tragedies. As a young 21-year-old nurse, the very first patient that I admitted at the Hospital for Sick Children was 13 months old. She came to us with her parents, her mother and her father, and she had what appeared to be a rope burn around her little 13-month-old neck. The story from the parents was that she was tangled up in a balloon that was attached to her crib after a party, but the story didn't really quite hang together. We dutifully wrote down the parents' stories and managed the child's health. The child was admitted, of course. We were already on high alert because we just weren't sure what happened.

In the morning, when the parents came back, the mother came in first while the father was parking the car and said to me, "I need to tell you, the father caused the injury." Just then, he walked in. So I sat them down again. Again, I was a very young nurse, so I brought my direct supervisor in to hear the story again. It turns out that he gave a different story from the day before. We left the room and went and called the family and children services and started an investigation. It turns out, through their investigation, that it was the father who had actually caused the injury. He had actually tried to strangle the child. Needless to say, this child was taken from her parents. There were charges that were pending, on the father's behalf. The mother left the father and we had family and children's aid to be able to come in to that.

Again, as a very young nurse, I had to grow up in a hurry and recognize that there are people in our society—parents, caregivers and other members of our society—who will go ahead and harm these young children. It's horrifying to me. But at that point, my thought was, "I hope now that this poor little girl, who has already sustained"—fortunately no lasting damage but an injury such as having been attempted to be strangled when she was so young. I'm hoping now that, when she went into care, she was going to be protected and not have any further issues.

But the reality is, I used to see a whole lot of patients coming through emergency at SickKids, with neglect or

injuries that weren't explainable by what the caregiver had to say. These children were not just being brought in by parents; sometimes family members and sometimes workers, and families that the child was in care from the children's aid society. So it's always been a concern of mine that our vulnerable children have a safe place to go and that they're not being harmed, and if they are, that we've got the mechanisms in place to avoid future tragedies from unscrupulous caregivers and folks who would step in and harm these young children.

Of course, the worst of these—we've seen issues of neglect. I used to see stories that I wouldn't even say in this House. I know that those of us who have worked at SickKids or worked with this vulnerable population know of stories that are just so horrific with children involved that we really can't speak about them further. There are situations that I've never spoken about since. So I know that it's an incredible toll not just on the caregivers—and I want to give a shout-out to all those workers and all those folks who work in our children's aid societies that care for these children, the ones who have to investigate, the child and youth advocates that we have out there, nurses, doctors, other allied health professionals, counsellors that actually have to talk about these horrific things. I know they join me today in making sure that we have legislation that will assist children to be safe from here on. I'm proud that our government is bringing this Bill 117 forward to debate.

Having said all that, children's safety is uppermost in my mind, and that's why I'm proud to speak to it today. I know that Bill 117's reporting requirements serve to strengthen the ability of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, an office which this government did establish in 2007 to act in instances where children and youth are severely harmed or die in care. Sometimes these children don't die in those situations; they may be severely injured and come in through our emergency departments at the hospitals in Ontario, and then the children end up being so injured that we're not able to save them and they die while they are under hospital care.

I have to tell you, there is no greater tragedy than having to witness this and assist those young patients to journey into the next life, knowing that this was a totally preventable death, a totally preventable injury. I'd have to say that these cases stay with me, and it helps me, when I'm speaking about these things, to come from a place of making sure we put strong provisions in place to deal harshly with those who will offend, but also to try to prevent these tragedies to begin with.

As part of our government's commitment, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services takes its role of protecting Ontario's children with the utmost seriousness. It does work closely today with the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth in recognition of the important contribution he makes to bring the voices of children and youth forward. Of course, he does join with all those of us who bring their voices forward—and I really appreciated the member from Hamilton Mountain's recog-

nition of some of the tragedies that have happened more recently—and who bring those voices, again, to this chamber so that we can all join together to make sure we have legislation that is going to continue to protect the children going forward.

But as part of the working relationship, the ministry has developed an effective and efficient mechanism to share information with the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth in cases where that child involved with the children's aid society dies and passes away. With last year's passing of Bill 8, the MPP and public sector accountability act, our government broadened the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth's authority to investigate matters relating to children and youth involved in the child protection system.

When the member's current bill came into committee, I can attest to the great deal of work and thoughtfulness that went into the clause-by-clause discussion of the bill. It's that thoughtful discussion of this work that helps to craft a bill that is going to assist in what our government wants to do, and indeed all members of the House want to do, to provide that safety for the children going forward. I know that the member from Hamilton Mountain, myself and others who sat through those hearings can take pride in our work on the bill as it passed through committee, and, in saying that, also note that there is more work going forward and it's really up to all of us, each and every day, to look out for some of these vulnerable children in all societies and sectors of our life.

I wanted to talk about how, in particular, I feel the committee made the right decision through limiting the scope of Bill 117 to its original parameters that benefit children who have had contact with a CAS in the previous 12 months. The revised scope now aligns with the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth's new responsibilities of investigation and oversight of the child welfare system, as is set out in Bill 8. I know that any time a child in care dies, we have a collective responsibility to determine what happened. Our Ministry of Children and Youth Services continues to work closely with the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, but we do recognize the important contribution he continues to make to elevate the voices of children and youth.

1600

I don't see us stopping the discussion here on Bill 117. I think it brings awareness to all of us in society that we have that collective responsibility as well, as caregivers, as friends of children, as teachers—you know, any member of society who deals with children in their care. I think we all have that collective responsibility to work together to ensure the safety of our children.

I think that I want to leave off, in my conversation with this, that I'm very pleased to see this bill come forward. I think the third reading coming so closely on the clause-by-clause consideration that we just did a couple of weeks ago is testament to the fact that we want to, as a government, take this bill forward to ensure that we can pass the legislation. I want to thank her again for her work and her advocacy. Anybody who has spoken

with the member about this topic can recognize that she has incredible passion for this work, and I know that the safety of children in care is certainly at the heart of what she feels and why she's bringing this bill forward.

I know that I'm very proud to lend my full support to this bill, which will strengthen the protection for children and youth in this province by ensuring that our agencies involved in a situation where a child in care was severely harmed or killed are reported to the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth. But I really, really hope that we'll see this bill as being a very successful step in ending the heartbreaking tragedies of children dying in care.

I will conclude by saying that I hope all members in the House do step forward to support this bill and that we will all, each and every day that we are involved with children in any capacity, be mindful of the responsibility that we all have in making sure that our most vulnerable children in our society are looked after for a lifetime.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to rise to speak in support of Bill 117. My NDP colleague and fellow critic is, as was previously mentioned, very passionate about this private member's bill, as she should be. It's a good step. Now, I am not going to pretend that it will solve every issue that we have in the child protection agencies issues portfolio. Clearly, all you have to do is look at the Auditor General's report from last week and, quite frankly, from numerous years to understand that there are bigger issues at play here.

But, having said that, since the child advocate was established in 2007, less than 10 years ago, within the first year of his mandate he was requesting that he have this additional ability: that he be notified if a death occurs when a child is under some kind of protection with a child protection agency. He has wanted that and I think he will do a good job at it. I've been very impressed with the work of the child and youth advocate since he was appointed. It is challenging and stressful work, to be sure, but he's done an excellent job in his role. This, to me, is just one part of what his ultimate mandate should be.

I would never presuppose to suggest that an independent officer of the assembly would need any advice from a lone member. However, I would assume that he is looking to have this additional review power so that he can see where and if there are systemic issues that can be dealt with.

So, again, congratulations to the member from Hamilton Mountain for bringing forward Bill 117. As we know, this will require children's aid societies or child protection agencies to report to the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth if a child has experienced serious bodily harm and was in contact with a children's aid protection agency in the last 12 months. It will also require children's aid societies and service providers to report the death of a child to the provincial advocate. In both circumstances, the provincial advocate will be provided with a summary of the circumstances surrounding the incident or death.

In addition, it will require a CAS or service provider to provide contact information to the provincial advocate for the child who has experienced serious bodily harm in an attempt to offer his assistance—reach out to see what he can help with. These are very simple, basic changes, but I'm certainly happy to support them.

The current process completely bypasses the provincial advocate being notified of a child's death or injury. The current process for reporting a child's death requires a CAS to file a report of all children who died and were receiving care from a CAS within the last 12 months. The report must be prepared within 14 days of a child's death or when the CAS was informed about the death, and must then be submitted to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, as well as to the chief coroner.

I believe that the provincial advocate deserves to be part of this process. Since 2008, as I mentioned, the provincial advocate has been calling for more access to information about children and youth involved in the child welfare system, in addition to broadening his office's right to access coroner's files on deaths.

As I say, I have no quibble with the amendment to the private member's bill, but there is one child advocate in the province of Ontario, and I believe there are 47 child protection agencies as it stands. So, clearly, we have to move a little further back—go further back in the process—than just ensuring that the child and youth advocate is notified about serious harm or death. We have to go back to how we are actually providing the service. How are we making it better for the children in care or the children who are going in and out of care?

That's why I say that while I'm happy to support Bill 117, it is important to understand that we have a problem in Ontario with how we deal with children and youth who need our assistance. It's not a statement from an opposition member; it's a recurring theme we have seen in numerous Auditor General's reports.

I don't have a magic solution; I don't have a private member's bill that I can table tomorrow and discuss. But it is a problem, and we have to look beyond our Ontario-centric borders and figure out who is doing this well and how we can improve it for children and youth who need our assistance, because it doesn't take long to figure out that we've got a long way to go to improve the lives of the most vulnerable children in our population. Those are the ones who are not currently being well served by their guardians, their parents—the people they are expecting to protect them.

We need to ensure that independent officers have the necessary information when performing investigations into the death or injury of our province's most vulnerable children and youth. But, right now, we've been limiting what has been given to the provincial advocate, whose mandate is to "provide an independent voice for children and youth, including First Nations children and youth and children with special needs, by partnering with them to bring issues forward."

Unfortunately, when a child or youth dies, the provincial advocate finds out, not through the children's protec-

tion agencies but, instead, through the media. This is wrong. I want to read a piece of the provincial advocate's submission to the Standing Committee on General Government regarding Bill 8. The Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth argued that the "provincial advocate has as much information about the death of a child in his mandate as an ordinary member of the public and much less information than the media reporters assigned to cover these tragic deaths." This is wrong. There are parties, like the coroner's office, the provincial advocate, the ministry, the child protection agencies, that all play a role in the investigation of a child's death or serious injury, but it certainly stands that not all these parties are sharing that information.

We must take opportunities to learn why they happened, how they happened and how to prevent them from happening in the future. But that requires having all the right parties involved in the process.

1610

Speaker, at a time when there's a clear systematic issue with the province's child protection system, as highlighted by last week's Auditor General's report, it is imperative that we take all necessary steps to make the system more accountable. That's why I say, while I'm happy to support Bill 117, that we need to go further back into the process and actually start looking at what is happening with those children when they're in care, what are they needing that we're not providing.

I would suggest to you that one of the obvious things is, we are walking away from children who reach out for care at age 16 and above. We have an opportunity that many provinces across Canada already offer, which is, if you're a youth who needs assistance between the ages of 16 and 18, in many other provinces in Canada you would have that care through your local child protection services. In Ontario, we stop it at 16, unless you're already in care.

We're already seeing it with the numbers of youth homelessness. One of the reasons that youth homelessness numbers are increasing is because we don't provide assistance when you reach out from 16 to 18. My colleague the former member from Barrie, Rod Jackson, worked very hard on this file and had really moved the debate forward on this. I welcome and encourage the government to take up that banner because it is something that the child protection agencies understand. They understand the need and they're ready to take on the responsibility. We just need, as legislators, to bring it forward.

The Auditor General also found that the ministry does not have a process in place to review children who are receiving protection services from the CAS who are not crown wards. Again, I'll read an excerpt from the Auditor General's report: "Although the ministry reviews the files of all eligible crown wards annually for compliance with requirements and to assess whether their needs are identified and appropriately addressed, it no longer reviews the files of non-crown wards. The ministry discontinued such reviews over 10 years ago in

2003, even though ... they identified numerous instances of societies not complying with legislated and ministry program requirements."

Now, I know I have another colleague who wants to wade in on Bill 117, so I won't take too much more time. But all I would like to say is, let's pass Bill 117. Let's get that done. Let's expand the child and youth advocate's mandate, but let's actually go further back and try to assist kids and try to assist our children and youth who need the care before it becomes critical injury or death. To me, it's a little like shutting the barn door after the horses have fled. We need to go back, and this is why I credit the Auditor General for numerous reports where she has raised issues with the child protection process.

Credit the minister responsible on Friday after the release of the AG's report. She said, "We're going to issue a directive for the children's aid society"—well, great. So, they've got some more paperwork to do and now they'll rush to do that and get it done, but how about we go back to where the problems are? How about we actually start talking to the experts and looking beyond our very narrow focus and say, "What can we do to actually make the system better for those most vulnerable youth?"

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I am pleased to be able to stand for a couple of minutes this afternoon and speak to this bill brought by my friend from Hamilton Mountain.

You know, it drives home a lot of points for me. Just in Windsor last week, there was a front-page newspaper story about a four-year-old boy who came to school, and the teacher noticed some lashes on his forearms. Then they looked at his back and his shirt and his front, and his father apparently had whipped him with a wire—four years old. So, obviously, children's aid was called in; the police were called in. It just drives home the point that this is a child in the care of a parent, not in the care of a children's aid society, not in the care of a foster home or anything like that, but you do have some parents out there who believe in the old-fashioned way, if you will.

I was an army brat; I make no bones about it. My dad used to have a big webbed belt. He would just have to snap it for me and I would jump to attention. I never got whipped with his webbed belt, but I paid a lot of attention when he got that belt out. I do have friends who, when we were young, were whipped. I guess I can tell you, Speaker, that when I was in grade school, not even high school, I remember getting the strap from the principal. In those days, those straps were wide and the beatings on the hand stung.

So I can understand corporal punishment up to a point, but what I don't understand in this day and age—things are different now than way back then—is how, to this day, when we have children in care, we don't do everything possible to protect them. I don't understand why anybody wants to keep information away from the person given the assignment as the child advocate. I don't understand why information on the abuse of children

isn't made readily available. I don't understand why, if the government is releasing reports on the abuse that children in care are suffering, they redact a lot of that information.

It seems to me that the purpose of being an advocate for children in care is that you want to protect them. If there's something going on in the system, you want to bring it to the government's attention and say, "This is not right. This shouldn't be happening, and we have to do everything in our power so that this doesn't happen again to anybody else." So that kind of information, to me, should be made public.

I was reading over what the member from Hamilton Mountain had to say not that long ago: that in the past six years, 57 children had died less than a year after a case with the children's aid society had been closed. If that wasn't bad enough, Speaker, she combined that with the number of children who had died while there was still an open file with the children's aid society, and that number climbs to more than 500. That's between 90 and 120 deaths a year, about one death every three days.

This is Ontario in 2015, and I don't know anybody in this chamber, anybody in our provincial Parliament, who would say that's acceptable. It is totally unacceptable, and we have to do everything in our power as legislators to do something about it.

This is an opportunity to do more. This is an opportunity to say, "We will do more." The member's bill makes sense, and we should all adopt it and do more than even what the bill says, because it's our vulnerable children. It's the children who need us most, and we have to be their voice. That's why definitely this bill is worth supporting by all members on both sides of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I'm pleased to rise in support of Bill 117 to amend the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Act. It is an important step. It has been pointed out that it is a fairly small step, but it is an important one to increase the responsibilities of the provincial advocate.

First established in 2007, the office has certainly really proved its worth. I was recently at the annual general meeting of the Ontario Psychological Association, and Irwin Elman was there with a panel of young people. I think what was so impressive is that he's encouraging young people to speak out about what they have seen in terms of harm to children. The panel was made up of a couple of individuals with developmental disabilities and a couple of young people who had had siblings with developmental disabilities. They spoke extremely eloquently about the type of stigma that is still attached to those with developmental disabilities. Obviously, they were talking not so much of physical harm in these cases, but in terms of the emotional toll, through bullying and so on, which can be a real harm to individuals with developmental disabilities.

1620

So to expand the provincial advocate's powers in this way is, I think, very important. Of course, any time a

child in care dies or is seriously harmed, we have a collective responsibility to determine what happened and why.

The member for Hamilton Mountain has talked a little bit about the recent coroner's inquest on little Katelynn. I think when we hear those types of details, we know that coroner's recommendations can be made. But having the provincial advocate involved in the case of a child's death while in care or with any contact within the last 12 months with a children's aid society can only add to the information that we receive and to the potential for corrective action.

But I do know that the Ministry of Children and Youth Services takes their role with regard to protecting children and avoiding future tragedy very, very seriously. The ministry does work very closely with the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, and there has been an opportunity since the passage of Bill 8, the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, which does provide the provincial advocate with the authority to investigate matters relating to children and youth who are involved in the child protection system. Of course, this bill does take that responsibility and authority just a little bit further.

I remember, as a young practising physician, I was on staff at Women's College Hospital when there was a requirement—it was fairly new at the time—for any physician who became aware of potential child abuse to immediately report to the children's aid society. I was in the emergency department at Women's College when a mother brought in her three-year-old daughter. She was complaining that the little girl had a vaginal discharge and she thought it was probably related to some new soap that she had been using. We examined the child. Those were the days when you could do a gram stain immediately and get a result, and the discharge was indicative of gonorrhea. And I, naturally, was absolutely horrified.

I immediately called the children's aid. The situation was clearly one of child abuse and it was really horrifying to me. My colleague the member for Cambridge has also detailed some of the things that she saw as a nurse at SickKids. We have a collective responsibility to ensure, obviously, that an investigation is done to try to get at the root cause of harming children. This is a very important step moving forward.

I would like to say, though, just in regard to a comment the member from Hamilton Mountain made related to aboriginal children in care, that I am so pleased that our government has now ensured that some children's aid societies have been established under the authority of First Nations so that, of course, cultural care can be provided. This is another small, incremental step in the right direction, as is this particular bill. I applaud the member for Hamilton Mountain for bringing it forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to speak to Bill 117, the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Amendment Act. I would also like to commend our critic, Sylvia

Jones, the member from Dufferin–Caledon and our deputy leader. She really puts a lot of stock into this file. I know when she writes a brief for us that she's done her homework and I feel very confident speaking to this bill as a result of the work that she has done.

As we've heard here today, the bill amends the act of 2007 to include an obligation on agencies and service providers to inform the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth promptly if they become aware of a death or critical injury of a child or youth and if the children's aid society has been involved with the child or youth or with the child's or youth's family within 12 months of death or critical injury.

All of us have an interest in providing the best opportunities for our children and youth. Our future depends on healthy young people, like these pages sitting in front of us, Mr. Speaker. This is the key to building a strong and prosperous society.

In the last four years since being elected, I had the pleasure of meeting and hearing from dozens of young people in my riding, some of whom reached out to dialogue about the issue of suicide and poverty that affects many families in Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. I think we need to keep encouraging our kids to turn to us, because we will hear them out and we will represent their voice and we will take great strides in ensuring their safety and well-being. As MPPs, we have a unique opportunity to respond to their issues.

Two years ago, when I served as our party's children and youth critic, I had the privilege of meeting our children and youth advocate, Irwin Elman, and the many youth who were involved with his office and youth groups. I liked Mr. Elman. I thought he was doing a very fine job of representing our youth's voice. But I did not like how the original legislation was undermining his position. That is all slowly beginning to change. It's not perfect, but changes are happening; specifically, just earlier, extending the provincial advocate's power last year with the passing of the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act. This allows the provincial advocate to initiate and conduct investigations into matters relating to children and the child welfare system.

As good as it sounds, it's worth mentioning that the powers are extremely limited. For example, the advocate's office cannot compel testimony. Bill 8 expanded the mandate of the provincial advocate to investigate serious incidents involving the care of a child or a youth, but only when it involves the children's aid society or a licensed home where a children's aid society is the placing agent. The bill failed to extend the same level of protection to other vulnerable children and youth under the advocate's mandate. This is troubling, considering that a serious incident can occur anywhere from a youth detention centre to a mental health facility. As such, our province is the only one in all of Canada with limited power for investigations by the provincial advocate, and still remains the one with less authority and tools to carry out the duties compared with the other six independent officers of this Legislature.

With the passing of Bill 117, the advocate will become privy to more information involving criminal cases against children and youth. Mr. Elman has been advocating for changes that would allow the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth access to information about children and youth involved in the child welfare system and youth criminal justice system, in addition to broadening his office's right to access coroner's files on deaths.

Under the existing legislation, the advocate has access to the same level of information as the general public. He cannot make inquiries because the ministry would say that he is not authorized to look into it. These roadblocks diminish the advocate's role. Again, Bill 117 aims to change that by ensuring his office receives information, which is a summary of circumstances, when there is a death or serious bodily harm against a child or youth where the victim or the victim's family has sought or received a children's aid society service.

In my meeting with the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, it was made clear the provincial advocate's office should have beefed-up powers so it can be a more effective voice for our vulnerable children, powers that should run parallel to the powers given to the Ombudsman's office. The Ombudsman is an independent officer of the Legislature who investigates citizens' complaints against government services. The children and youth advocate, too, should be given power to help our young people.

Again, the advocate's office needs to be redesigned so as to make it meaningful, so that the staff have the ability to conduct investigations in a timely manner and all in an effort to prevent further incidents from occurring. It's about oversight. Increased oversight should always be promoted. I know the members opposite will roll their eyes, but I have to remind them: Over the course of the Liberal government's tenure, there have been many examples of instances where increased oversight could have helped chart a better path. Oversight would provide children and youth with the chance to have their voices heard, while monitoring conditions in facilities and making recommendations to improve various child-serving systems. Consider the findings in the Auditor General's 2015 annual report. She found that in half of the cases involving children, case workers failed to check all the backgrounds of adults who have contact with children. That is a lack of oversight.

It's still happening despite the tragic deaths of children, such as Katelynn Sampson. Katelynn was found dead covered in 70 wounds and broken ribs, broken and beaten so badly a coroner would discover her liver had ruptured, something more common to car crash victims than seven-year-olds—deplorable, Mr. Speaker. If the checks had been done, then this seven-year-old might not have lost her life. We must do better when it comes to protecting our children.

Another piece of legislation I'd like this House to pass is Bill 54, the Right to Care Act, introduced by my colleague the MPP for Stormont–Dundas–South Glen-

garry, Jim McDonell, which would allow children's aid to look after children who are over 16 years of age, so that the children are not left out on the street. As my friend and colleague MPP McDonell said so succinctly, we owe it to them "to eliminate the discrimination that exists against them in the Child and Family Services Act.... Through no fault of their own, these children are forced to navigate an adult welfare system that often excludes them from most services. Many end up homeless, and ... are 13 times more likely to be victims of violent crime."

1630

Originally, this bill was introduced by my colleague and former seatmate, the MPP for Barrie, Rod Jackson. I commend him for initiating it and raising awareness. I hope the government turns its attention to Bill 54 and ensures its swift passage. Thousands of youths' lives are at stake.

It is time to ensure that all children can access all services that should be available to them in their time of need. Most of all, it's about ensuring our young people have faith in the system and that the system is independent and able to review and investigate their concerns.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Pursuant to the order of House dated November 26, 2015, I am now required to put the question. Miss Taylor has moved third reading of Bill 117, An Act to amend the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Act, 2007 with respect to notices of serious bodily harm or death. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS
AWARENESS, RESEARCH
AND CARE ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION
AU DEUIL PÉRINATAL, LA RECHERCHE
SUR CE GENRE DE DEUIL ET L'AIDE
AUX PERSONNES VIVANT UN TEL DEUIL

Mr. Colle moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 141, An Act to require research to be undertaken and programs to be developed for pregnancy loss and infant death and to proclaim October 15 as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day / Projet de loi 141, Loi exigeant des recherches et des programmes sur les pertes de grossesse et les décès néonataux et proclamant le 15 octobre Journée de sensibilisation au deuil périnatal.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Eglinton–Lawrence has the floor to lead off the debate.

Mr. Mike Colle: In my remarks, I'd like to welcome—my two daughters are here, my daughter Bianca

and my daughter Kristen; my wife, Sharon; my grandchildren: Poppy, my granddaughter Olivia and my granddaughter Lucia. Welcome to Queen's Park.

I've spoken to this before in second reading. Bill 141, as I mentioned, is a bill that tries to break the wall of silence that surrounds pregnancy and infant loss. Every year in Ontario, thousands of women lose their children through miscarriage, through stillbirths and immediately after birth—neonatal birth. That's thousands of women in all of our ridings, in all of our cities.

Women go through living hell when they lose the children they've been carrying and there's no one around to help them. They can't go to their families, because it's something you don't talk about. Many doctors, many nurses and many hospitals do not have the training, the resources, the know-how to help these mothers who go through the loss of an infant. In many cases, the facilities that treat mothers who are successful at birth are state-of-the-art. There's the best of care in hospitals if you're successful in having a wonderful baby, but if you're not successful and the baby dies through stillbirth or through miscarriage, essentially many of the hospital staff, many of the people who are supposed to provide you the best of health care, are not trained to help you. They, in many cases, don't even give you the privacy of a room, because sometimes you're in same room or next door to where there are babies crying and successful celebrations happening; yet you're alone on a bed with nobody to help you. All they sometimes say to you is, "Well, too bad. Try again. You're young; you can have more."

This is part of the insensitivity that occurs towards women and their spouses and their families when they are in this situation of experiencing this infant loss after pregnancy. This happens because it's not just a medical health system issue; I think it's a societal issue that for too many years, this has been a subject that we're not supposed to talk about, that we're not supposed to even mention to our family and to our closest friends.

Subsequently, the programs in our hospitals are not there. You may be lucky enough to go Sunnybrook or you may be lucky enough to go to Mount Sinai, but in many of our hospitals, there aren't the systems in place to help women get through pregnancy loss. In some cases, the systems aren't there to prevent pregnancy loss. With the proper treatment and support for women, they would have fewer stillbirths and fewer miscarriages.

In talking to Dr. John Kingdom, the head of obstetrics and gynecology at Mount Sinai, he says that if there were more investments made in health care to help women that are high-risk and are pregnant, we wouldn't have as many stillbirths and miscarriages. He said that there's a lack of coordination of the expertise. It's very hit-and-miss. This is a doctor who's world renowned in this area of maternal health.

Dr. Jon Barrett at the women and babies clinic at Sunnybrook has a program called the Women and Babies Program, but that program is not even funded within the hospital budget; it's funded by a donor. Within months, that program that helps high-risk pregnancies, the money

from that donor is going to run out. So there's no money in the hospital budget to help mothers who would benefit from the expertise of Dr. Jon Barrett at Sunnybrook.

There's an amazing group of volunteer women across Ontario called the PAIL Network, the Pregnancy and Infant Loss Network. They go all over the province counselling women, giving them support. They also train nurses, midwives, and they try to train medical staff on how to deal with high-risk pregnancies. But the PAIL Network has two paid staff for the whole province—two paid staff, and luckily they have volunteers.

This whole area of high-risk pregnancy and mothers that lose their babies have basically ad-hoc, charitable programs that are helping them. There isn't a comprehensive program out of the Ministry of Health to help counsel and support these women. As I said, every day this tragedy occurs—a gut-wrenching tragedy—and there are no systems in place in this province.

But Ontario's not alone: Across Canada, these programs do not exist. In the United States, it's even worse. There are a lot of resources for successful births, and there should be; but, basically, there is a second-tier, second-class health care system when it comes to mothers that are high-risk. If they lose their babies, there are no counselling programs; many of these mothers suffer from mental illness and anguish for years to come because there was no counselling.

A neighbour of mine said that she had her next-door neighbour come to her for a whole year; she would come every night to cry at her kitchen table, because she said that her family wouldn't talk to her about her loss. So she didn't go to a counsellor, she didn't go to her family, no doctor—she used to come and cry at her next-door neighbour's kitchen table, trying to cope with this grief. That should not continue. There should be a province-wide system of counselling, a province-wide system of support for high-risk pregnancy and training.

1640

I know the volunteers at the PAIL Network went to the midwifery program at Ryerson last week. The midwives of Ontario also support Bill 141 because they only get about one session of training in high-risk pregnancy and infant loss in their whole program in midwifery—one session of training. What do they get in medical school? The RNs are supportive of this legislation because they know there needs to be more training.

So that's what this bill would do. It would direct the Ministry of Health to establish programs that are substantive in training medical personnel and making sure that there are province-wide systems that help mothers that go through pregnancy loss. Right now, there are no province-wide systems. If you're in northern Ontario and in the indigenous communities, the rate of miscarriage and stillbirth is much higher than it is in the rest of Ontario. There are very few programs in those remote communities to help mothers, so we need a province-wide system of support and expertise.

The good news is that, bravely, many mothers have come forward in great courage to talk about this tragedy.

I really want to pay special tribute to some of these real heroes who have come forward in recent weeks, because they were told, "You can't talk about this." They were told, "The government isn't interested, the media won't write about it and your members of Parliament won't listen to you." They said, "Don't bother." But they said, "No, we are going to speak out."

So they told their stories. Liza Walter told her story about her poor son Levi who was lost; Amanda Oram has a blog telling about her stories, about her tragic loss of her five-month-old son Cole, who died after five months; Wendy Mouldsdale, a nurse practitioner out of Sunnybrook who goes all over the province trying to train medical staff, trying to give support to mothers—she's out there, but with very few resources; Michelle La Fontaine, the volunteer chair—a bereaved mother herself—of the PAIL Network who's doing incredible volunteer work in this field; and Jamie McCleary has come here for the press conference, and I don't think I've heard a more eloquent person in this Legislature than Jamie McCleary.

If I could just read some of Jamie's heart-wrenching story. This is a mother who has lost two children, and she says she's not going to stay silent anymore. On her behalf, I'd like to read Jamie's deputation. Here's what Jamie McCleary said:

"I didn't think much of it at first when the ultrasound technician refused to speak to me at all. I thought it was a little odd that she asked me when I was expected to see my doctor next, and when she refused to let me see my son on the screen or to give me his picture to take home, I knew something was wrong.

"She wouldn't tell me anything and I was terrified. I sobbed the entire drive home"—she had to drive home by herself, after being told this, because her husband was at work; can you imagine?—"all alone, trying desperately to get a hold of someone who could tell me what was happening with my baby. My doctor was unreachable, my husband wasn't home from work, and I didn't know what to do.

"I tried for hours to reach my obstetrician. When my phone calls were finally returned, I was told to come in immediately. We were seated in the waiting room, among four heavily pregnant women, waiting to find out what was wrong with our son. I could never have imagined that any medical professional, especially a female obstetrician, who, herself, was expecting a baby, could have been so cold. She opened my file and said, 'So, your baby's dead.'" That's what she said, an obstetrician, a medical doctor. "She handed me a prescription to bring on labour, told me to go home, with vague directions of problems to watch out for, and left the room." This is Jamie McCleary, sent home again.

"Most health care professionals simply do not know how to deliver compassionate care to families in our situation.

"I was clueless about what to expect from then on. I didn't realize I would be in labour for over 17 hours. I

didn't realize it would be the most excruciating pain I had ever felt in my life.

"We didn't know we would need to make arrangements for someone to watch our daughter so that my husband could hold my hand, instead of having to distract our two-year-old in the basement when she was afraid of her mommy's cries of pain.

"I have never felt more alone than I did during that day, struggling to deliver my son, alone in my bedroom.

"When he was born, I sat on the floor in my bathroom, holding him in my hand, not knowing if I should clean him up to look at him. I felt as though I was doing something wrong. I felt judged and confused, and in the end I let my thoughts win and ignored every impulse in my body to really see my baby.

"That is the greatest regret of my life. There isn't a day that goes by that I think about that moment, wishing I had been stronger, wishing that I had known that it was okay, that loving my son wasn't something to be ashamed of."

I know it's difficult to hear, but that's Jamie's story.

That is not just one person; this happens by the thousands every year in Ontario: women going through this living hell because there is no focused, comprehensive program or series of programs in our health care system to deal with this reality. It's a reality. I know, going through this in our own family and going through this in talking to many of my colleagues in the Legislature even, many of you have said, "It happened to my mother. It happened to my aunt. It happened to my wife." In almost all of our families, these things have happened and are still happening.

That's why this bill today is not about pointing fingers or condemning the health care system or condemning health care professionals. As the mothers say, it's time to break the silence. They have bravely and courageously, as I said, gone to meetings. They have come to Queen's Park to make deputations. They've set up their own Facebook page and websites. They've gotten reactions from people across Canada. We've had people from British Columbia saying, "We need something like this here in British Columbia," and people from Nova Scotia. People from the States are saying, "We need something like Bill 141 here. Thank God you broke the silence, that you spoke out." That's what these brave women have done, and on their behalf, I'm so glad to have done this.

We do have great medical expertise. Because of the bravery of these women and their courage to speak out, there is hope that this is going to be finally given the attention it deserves.

We've got, again, great nurse practitioners like Wendy Mouldsdale. We've got great volunteers out of the PAIL Network. We've got great, brave mothers like Liza and Amanda. We've got doctors like Dr. Barrett at Sunnybrook, who, within three days, came up with a proposal saying, "Listen, if your government wants to do something, here's what to do." So we know what has to be done. We don't have to reinvent the wheel; we just have to have a comprehensive program that needs funding,

that needs resources, and we have to support these mothers as a society.

It's something we should talk about. It's not easy, believe me; it's not easy when this happens, as you all know. But if we don't talk about it, nothing's going to be done. We're going to continue to have this system which is, at best, piecemeal in dealing with these precious little ones, and the mothers and their families who suffer and grieve for months to come.

Again, we've got the willingness of doctors to co-operate. We've got the willingness of these volunteers. We know we have the Ontario Nurses' Association and the midwifery organizations. They will all come together, but they can't do it unless there's a program within the Ministry of Health to put some resources towards pregnancy and infant death and infant loss.

1650

Right now, there is, as I've said, a real gap. There's a complete wall of silence, where they're told—again, as I've said, the mothers say, "Oh, well, it's bad luck. You can have more. You're still young. Go ahead." That is not the way to help these mothers and families. You need professional counselling. You need funded counselling programs. You need doctors who are trained. You need to ask your local hospital.

I ask all of you here: Go to your hospital and ask them if they've got a program for high-risk pregnancy and women who suffer infant loss. Ask your hospital in Sudbury. Ask in Vaughan if your hospital has it. Ask in Ottawa if they've got these programs. You'll see that it's hit and miss; it's ad hoc. Sometimes you've got a brave doctor and a midwife, and maybe a nurse who has put together a program with a volunteer. That is not good enough.

I urge all of you, on behalf of these mothers and children, to ask at your local hospital. See what they have there, and I'd like to see what you give back to me. I really would like to help. Maybe, together, we can get this silence broken.

Again, I want to thank the Minister of Health, Minister Hoskins, who said, "Listen, I think it's time we do this." He's a medical doctor. He said, "Yes, there are huge gaps."

Dr. Kingdom said that despite all these advances in health care in Canada and Ontario, this is an area that's not improving; despite all the advancement in science, it's not improving. The number of stillbirths is not declining.

I think there's great hope because of the courage of these mothers, especially, and their husbands, their families, our volunteers. Like I just mentioned, Lynn Davis came all the way from London by bus here today, and she came by train the other day just to attend a meeting. These are the kinds of volunteers we have in all of our communities. They're helping these mothers, but they're doing it on a dime and on their own. They should be given the supports so that women like Lynn Davis could do some counselling, because now they have to turn people away. They don't have enough counsellors.

Again, I want to thank my daughter Bianca especially, who has encouraged me to do this, and all of you for listening.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Speaker, I'm glad to rise today and speak to Bill 141. I want to take this moment to thank the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for bringing forth this bill. I know he has been here at the Legislature for quite a long time. I've sat opposite him on many committees, and we've had great debates back and forth. I always like it when something good comes forward out of bills, and what he has done so far in bringing this bill up to third reading—and I know it will pass. I truly want to thank him for his hard work and dedication in ensuring that this bill sees the light of day. I'm proud to call you one of our colleagues in this House because I think what you're doing with this bill is tremendous for Ontario and for women who, unfortunately, have to go through this pain and loss in their lives. Thank you very much for doing what you've done.

Mr. Speaker, this bill isn't an easy thing to talk about, as the member from Eglinton–Lawrence mentioned. I think we all know somebody who has gone through this experience, whether it be a mother, a sister, your own wife, your cousin, what have you. It affects so many people in this province, so I'm glad we're able to put politics aside and bring this bill forward for something that's better for Ontario.

I also want to thank everyone who came to committee last week. It's not very easy to enter a room full of strangers and be taped and put on the TVs throughout the Legislature and talk about the emotional experiences that you underwent. But through their activity of coming forward and telling their stories, they're helping to shape this bill so that we can make changes in the province and have the supports that—Bill 141 is going to come forth and make it a better place to be in Ontario. Thank you to those members of the public who came forward and spoke at committee.

I also want to thank all the parents who have advocated for all the families who are silent in this province. They were the voices that came through and worked to make these issues known to the Legislature, so that they could act and make legislation that will hopefully be able to find solutions down the road through research.

This bill is providing the needed attention that, I believe, for so long hasn't been there for the people of this province. This bill is being brought forward because of the current lack of programs for support, counselling and research regarding pregnancy, infant loss and death.

The Pregnancy and Infant Loss Network, PAIL, was formed in 1992, and I'm thankful they're there for many women throughout this province. They are the leaders in the field of pregnancy and infant death within Ontario. They work with families, health care professionals, caregivers, clergy and funeral directors to offer educational training, along with a number of support services to provide support to families affected by this unfortunate

loss of life. It's a non-profit organization with support groups throughout jurisdictions across the province. Again, I'd like to thank PAIL for what they've done.

Just some basic facts that I've learned through this process: A stillbirth is defined as a fetal death that occurs at 20 weeks of pregnancy. A miscarriage is a fetal death that occurs prior to 20 weeks of pregnancy. One out of every five live births ends in a loss. I think if you asked the average Ontarian what they thought would be the number, they would be quite astounded that that number is so high.

This bill has some great implications for the province of Ontario. I'll go over a few sections.

October 15 of each year would be known as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day. New Brunswick, British Columbia, Manitoba and the Northwest Territories already have legislation to proclaim October 15 as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Day.

In fact, Light Up Canada is an event that lights up landmarks across the country. I noticed that Calgary was supposed to participate in it, and Edmonton, Vancouver, Whistler, Toronto, Niagara and Fort Erie, so the message is getting out there about this issue. I'm glad Ontario is now poised to pass legislation to help support women throughout this province.

Within this bill, subsection 6 of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Act is amended in the following ways: It will establish a comprehensive research initiative and programs to assist mothers and families who experience pregnancy loss and infant death. It will undertake a comprehensive and comparative analysis to understand the factors contributing to an increased risk of pregnancy loss and infant death. It will develop programs to help reduce the risk of pregnancy loss and infant death.

It will also develop programs across the province to provide counselling and support services to mothers and families who experience pregnancy loss and infant death. It will undertake a comparative analysis and survey of best practices within other jurisdictions to help prevent pregnancy loss and infant death within Ontario.

I'd like to take a moment and share an email I received this morning with regard to Bill 141. It didn't get in in time to be in the committee hearings, and I thought I'd read it in the Legislature. It touched upon another aspect. Many of the members weren't able to be at committee, and I'd urge you to read the transcripts of the stories that were told.

"I am a bereaved mother. I am a mother to four recurrent pregnancies lost to miscarriage and a five-month-old daughter who was killed by a caregiver in 2010. I am also the mother to two beautiful living children, and on December 2, 2015, I delivered another daughter who passed away at 18 weeks' gestation. The magnitude of such losses is almost incomprehensible. What's worse is trying to cope with the devastating losses during the loss and the many years to follow.

"When my five-month-old daughter was killed, things were really difficult. As you can imagine, dealing with the grief of losing your child was insurmountable. To

lose your infant at the hands of someone else, that is a new realm of devastation. When we lost our daughter Brookelyn, however, the amount of resources available were quite limited.

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“Trying to rise above the tide of grief as a family was often difficult, and trying to aid my then three-year-old daughter through the loss of her baby sister was almost impossible, as there are limited outlets for support for her age.

“My husband and I learned that we were expecting our third child the night of our five-month-old’s funeral, just a mere four days after her death. It was an incredibly stress-filled pregnancy, but we made it through, and our son was born healthy and thrives today. We tried again in 2013 to add another child to our family and began a long road of losses. Out of the four miscarriages we’ve just experienced, none was the same as the last. Each at different stages of nearly five weeks, eight weeks, 10 weeks and 12 weeks. Then our most recent loss just two weeks shy of being classified as a stillbirth; though she truly was born still, she is still medically deemed a miscarriage. It was necessary for my husband and I to endure three consecutive losses before any testing would ever be done to try and assess why I had once been able to give birth to living children and now could no longer make it through a pregnancy. It’s cruel to endure even one loss through miscarriage or stillbirth; if you’ve been lucky enough not to have experienced this, I am grateful. To be forced to experience this three times in a row before you’ll ever receive help to find out what may be wrong, though, is damaging. Each consecutive pregnancy after a loss is filled with fear. Fear of becoming attached, fear of another loss, fear of telling anyone, though you can’t help but feel the excitement of the possibility of a new baby. The now knowing that it is just a possibility that you will bring home your child, and having that feeling even in the final trimester. The urge to begin buying for your new baby, and the hesitation in doing so, because you fear the need to return it all in the end.

“I never imagined I’d be a statistic such as this. Nor did I ever imagine I’d fall into this category as many times as I have. I urge you to look deeply into the current arrangement for what is available to parents of pregnancy and infant loss. To understand that regardless of the debate on when life begins, for us, our babies were wanted and loved before we even truly knew of their existence. I hope you will read the link I am providing, as it is the recent experience of the birth of my daughter.”

The link talks about their daughter’s stillborn birth.

“The battle I fought to have the right to deliver my child, the urgency to know that her life will be honoured and remembered, and respected in the fact that she was my child. She was loved and wanted, and she is mourned so deeply despite her very short life. I hold hope that you will see how many bereaved families there are like mine who are desperately counting on ... Bill 141” to pass. “A future that will hopefully be filled with plentiful resources, compassion, medical support and recognition.”

Mr. Speaker, that is a very touching email, and we heard many such stories. We also heard from PAIL during the committee meeting, and how they are helping women throughout certain areas. I think it’s an excellent idea of Mr. Colle to bring forward how we can spread this across the province to ensure that supports are there throughout the province.

I was going to read a little bit about Jamie McCleary, because I was quite touched by that story, and you brought it forward. It was just shocking to hear what she actually had to go through, and it speaks badly of the medical system. I know there are so many doctors and nurses and support out there who would also be shocked at what happened. However, the fact is that it did happen and may occur in other parts of the province. Mr. Colle’s bill comes forward and hopefully will shed light and some education on some of the medical professionals who do need better direction as to how to deal with pregnancy loss or infant mortality.

I’m grateful that we were able to hear from Dr. John Kingdom at the committee, as he spoke highly of how things in Ontario can be better, of how working with PAIL makes this province a better place.

I’m not going to read about Jamie. I’d hate to double—it’s not really double speaking, but speak again with regard to what has already been read in the Legislature. But I do want to thank Jamie for coming forward and telling her story. We listened, and we heard what Jamie had to say. We’re ensuring that this bill gets through third reading and is passed into law so that we can hopefully prevent the treatment she received from ever occurring again. Hopefully the research that will grow out of the support of this bill will decrease the one-in-five percentage of children we lose.

I have one more item here that I wanted to mention. It came out of the committee hearings and I just wanted to read it in here again. It’s just a fact that threw me off, and I mentioned it earlier, but Canada has the second-highest rate of first-day infant mortality in the industrialized world. You wouldn’t think that was true of a country as great as we have, and it’s not a slight upon our country, but it’s a fact I think we can share. We can always do better than what we’re doing. We can always review how our health care system operates and what supports are in place and continually make changes and upgrades. I believe we’re doing that with this bill.

Furthermore, this suggests that further attention must be paid to better understanding the causes of infant mortality. Bill 141 can lead the way for the rest of the country by conducting coordinated research that is among the first of its kind and could begin to provide answers to questions that haunt thousands of Ontario families. That was pretty much coming from the PAIL Network when that was brought forward.

I think we have the start of a great expertise to build from in Ontario, in this region, that we could spread out. As Mr. Colle mentioned, there are a lot of volunteers who ensure this program keeps going and a lot of people out there that are willing to help and support women

throughout this province who unfortunately have to undergo this traumatic experience. I'm hopeful this bill will draw from the regions. I know we can build from the Toronto—you've talked about the London region. There is the Ottawa region, and northern Ontario, which I think would do well to expand and ensure that the support services are there for the losses that occur, but also the ability to transform the research into daily practice so that we can save more pregnancies, save more infants, and ensure that we have a healthier society and a healthy community.

Again, to those who came forward during the deputations to the committee and those who helped with input to the bill, thank you very much. To those who are here today, thank you again for your time and showing your support of the bill.

We on this side of the House fully support Mr. Colle's bill going forward. We look forward to seeing how it's implemented through the province. We will be there to help support it where it needs to be supported to ensure that it continues on its journey to be fully implemented. I hope we can have more bills such as this that make Ontario a better place, that don't really need to have the political barbs going back and forth continually. We get enough of that in question period. We'll keep that in question period, but outside of question period, we can get down and do some real work, as Mr. Colle has done today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am honoured to rise as MPP for London West, and also as the NDP women's issues critic, to offer some comments on this third reading of Bill 141, the Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness, Research and Care Act. Speaker, this is a timely bill, it is an important bill, and New Democrats are very pleased to support it.

When the founder of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg, recently announced on social media that his wife was pregnant after three miscarriages, Ontarians, Canadians and the world took notice. Mark Zuckerberg opened up on his Facebook page about the feelings of isolation he and his wife experienced as they struggled on their own to cope with the loss of the pregnancies. He wrote, "You feel so hopeful when you learn you're going to have a child. You start imagining who they'll become and dreaming of hopes for their future. You start making plans, and then they're gone."

He went on to say, "Most people don't discuss miscarriages because you worry your problems will distance you or reflect upon you—as if you're defective or did something to cause this...."

"In today's open and connected world, discussing these issues doesn't distance us; it brings us together. It creates understanding and tolerance, and it gives us hope."

Speaker, Bill 141 provides a catalyst for that kind of discussion to take place and for that kind of hope to start in the province. The bill proclaims October 15 as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day, and also amends

the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Act to set out an additional duty for the minister with respect to pregnancy loss and infant death to ensure that research and analysis is undertaken to assist those who experience pregnancy loss and to develop or expand programs to help them deal with the loss.

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This is an important issue when one considers the number of women in Ontario who will experience pregnancy loss. It's estimated that as many as one in four known pregnancies will end in miscarriage and about three quarters of those will happen before 12 weeks. The rate is much, much higher if it includes the loss of fertilized eggs before the woman knows she is pregnant.

While stillbirths are less common, stillbirth remains one of the most common adverse outcomes of pregnancy. It accounts for one third of all fetal deaths. In Ontario in 2011, there were 5.6 stillbirths for every 1,000 live births, which is more than 10 times the rate of deaths due to sudden infant death syndrome. Stillbirth is one of those topics we rarely talk about. It is regarded as deeply private and almost unmentionable in contrast to the frequent public education campaigns to prevent AIDS.

I want to talk for a moment about language and the evolution of language that is reflected in this bill. Several decades ago, natural pregnancy loss was routinely referred to as spontaneous abortion. To address the distress that some women felt because of the association of abortion with a pregnancy that was very much wanted, spontaneous abortion became miscarriage, a term that carries its own set of issues.

The root of the word is to miscarry something, which connotes the failure of the woman's body to do what it is supposed to do and conveying the sense that there is some fault or blame to assign. The word problematizes what is a normal physiological reaction: a healthy body recognizing a pregnancy that is incompatible with life.

Unfortunately, too many men and women are unaware of these facts. As a result, the grief that some women experience when they lose a pregnancy may be compounded by feelings of guilt and self-blame. The societal convention to hold off announcing a pregnancy until the first 12 weeks have passed contributes to the cone of silence around miscarriage and means that those who are in a position to offer comfort and support often do not know how to respond.

In 2013, a national study on miscarriage was conducted by the American Society for Reproductive Medicine. This involved a survey of almost 1,100 women and men across 48 US states to assess their attitudes and perceptions about miscarriage. Just over half of the respondents were female and 15% reported a history of miscarriage.

Now of course, this was a study that was conducted in the US, but I suspect that the findings would be similar if the survey was done in Canada.

Two thirds of those surveyed said that they thought miscarriage was rare despite the fact that up to 25% of women will experience an early pregnancy loss.

When asked about what causes miscarriage, three quarters of respondents said that a stressful event or long-standing stress were common causes and almost two thirds believed that lifting a heavy object could trigger miscarriage. Some 41% said miscarriages may be due to sexually transmitted diseases; 31% said previous abortions; and 28% cited use of implanted long-term birth control. Nearly one quarter of respondents falsely believed that a mother not wanting the pregnancy could result in a miscarriage.

The reality is that genetic abnormalities that make human development impossible are, in fact, the most common cause of miscarriage, accounting for 60% to 80%. Miscarriages are not associated with any action or inaction on the part of the woman.

The survey also highlighted the guilt and the shame surrounding miscarriages. Among respondents who had had a miscarriage, 40% believed that they had done something wrong to cause it; 27% felt ashamed; 40% felt alone; and 47% felt guilty. Because of misinformation about the causes of early pregnancy loss, many women feel shame and stigma if they admit losing a pregnancy. In a society that values the worth of women according to their ability, their desire and their willingness to carry a pregnancy to term and to raise children, it's no wonder that women often blame themselves.

Where respondent perceptions did match the reality was with regard to the trauma of miscarriage. Two thirds of all respondents agreed that the emotional impact of miscarriage can be as devastating as losing a child, which reflects the experience of many women in this province, and their partners as well. Certainly, this is borne out in the research, which highlights the increased risk of depression associated with miscarriage, even for a woman who goes on to deliver a healthy baby in a subsequent pregnancy.

For the authors of the study, one of the surprising findings was that people who had experienced miscarriage felt less alone, less ashamed and less guilty when celebrities and public figures disclosed that they had also had miscarriages. So talking openly and honestly about pregnancy loss is important. Debunking some of the false perceptions and raising awareness of the causes and the frequency of miscarriage can reassure those who are going through the experience. It can also help to reduce the stigma and the guilt that often accompany pregnancy loss and better support those who are grieving.

The same holds true for stillbirth, about the need for more information and for removing the shroud of secrecy that surrounds it. Research shows that about 25% of stillbirths do not have a known cause. However, a number of factors have been identified that increase the risk of stillbirth: if the mother had a previous stillbirth; if they are a first-time mother; if they are an older mother; if they are obese; if they have multiple pregnancies or if they smoke.

Stillbirths can be caused by obstetrical problems as well, such as umbilical cord abnormalities or problems with the placenta. They can also occur as a result of

infection or fetal abnormalities. They are also associated with low socio-economic status, as well as lack of access to quality prenatal care. Pregnant women who are poor have a two and a half times greater risk of stillbirth than other women, and this is a point I will return to later.

To validate the grief felt by many women about the loss of their pregnancies, the first Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day was declared on October 15, 2002, across 20 US states. In Canada, the first Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day was proclaimed in BC and New Brunswick in 2005, followed by Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. The day gives societal recognition to the significance of the pregnancy for the family and for the devastation they may be going through. It provides an opportunity to honour and remember the pregnancies that were lost, to create a more supportive environment for the bereaved parents, to encourage health care professionals to ensure that the support services are there for the parents who are dealing with the loss and to launch new research into why pregnancy and early infancy loss occur.

When the government moves forward to implement this bill, I encourage it to use a reproductive justice perspective. Reproductive justice is defined as "the complete physical, mental, spiritual, political, economic, and social well-being of women and girls, and will be achieved when women and girls have the economic, social and political power and resources to make healthy decisions about their bodies, sexuality and reproduction for" themselves, their families and their communities in all areas of their lives.

Reproductive justice acknowledges that not all women have the same ability to make reproductive choices. Their reproductive autonomy may be limited by lack of access to abortion services and by lack of social and financial resources that are necessary to have children and to raise them in safe and supportive environments. It acknowledges that the rates of stillbirth are much higher among women living in poverty, as I mentioned earlier, and also in certain regions of the province.

A 2015 population health study in southwestern Ontario showed a noticeably higher rate of infant mortality in the South West LHIN. That rate was on par with the provincial average of 5.4 per 1,000 live births, compared to the Erie St. Clair LHIN, which had a rate of 3.7 stillbirths per 1,000 live births. Similarly, there was a 2010 study by the Peel health unit that found a much higher rate of stillbirths in Peel—8.6 for every 1,000 live births—compared to the rest of the GTA.

Among First Nations women, there was a very recent study by the University of Alberta in 2015 that found a 70% higher risk for stillbirth in First Nations communities in northern Alberta. The statistics are similar in Ontario. A study this spring by researchers at St. Michael's Hospital found that immigrant parents in Ontario—who are also much more likely than non-immigrants to live in poverty—also faced significantly higher risk of stillbirth.

1720

Reproductive justice means recognizing that precarious employment, declining rates of unionization, high

student debt and lack of affordable housing are delaying the time for many women to feel that they are in a position to start a family, and that the risks of miscarriage increase significantly with age. It also acknowledges that pregnancy makes women more vulnerable to intimate partner violence and that spousal assault means a greater likelihood of stillbirth and a 50% greater risk of miscarriage.

Speaker, as this bill highlights, research is necessary to understand these differences and to address the social, economic, environmental and other factors that put certain populations at higher risk. Unfortunately, much of the data that's currently available to researchers is spotty and unreliable. For example, the Association of Public Health Epidemiologists in Ontario reported an increase in the number of stillbirths for which the cause of death was coded as "termination of pregnancy affecting fetus and newborn." However, the data does not indicate whether this increase is the result of a true increase in the occurrences of such events or whether it is due to increased registration of these stillbirth events.

The most fundamental principle of reproductive justice is to recognize that the loss of a pregnancy can have different meanings for different people and that not all women or men will experience the loss in the same way. For many women, early pregnancy loss represents the loss of a child. For these women, societal recognition of their loss with opportunities to publicly memorialize their child is an essential part of their grieving process. But not all women may feel this way, and every woman's right to define her pregnancy for herself and to define what the loss of the pregnancy represents must be respected.

What is important is that families have control and choice over how and whether they want to mark the loss of the pregnancy. The woman who feels relieved about miscarrying should not be made to feel guilty, just as the woman who mourns the loss of her child should be free to do so.

For women whose partners are male, the social norms of masculinity also condition their responses to pregnancy loss. They may not know how to grieve. They may feel their only job is to be strong to support their partner and that they may even face criticism if they display any emotion about the loss.

Speaker, we need to ensure that there are appropriate supports in place to help those who experience pregnancy loss—not only the woman, but also the woman's partner and others who cared about the pregnancy. There may be feelings of profound anguish at the loss of hopes and plans for a relationship with a child and the loss of future identity as a mother, as a father or as a grandparent. Developing new programs and enhancing existing programs to provide the individualized supports that women need will be one of the most significant benefits of this bill.

Here, Speaker, I want to share with this House a letter that I received from Nicole Hackney, a woman in London who experienced the loss of her daughter Nori at

21 weeks, and this was later followed by a miscarriage. The only way that Nicole was able to endure the devastation of these losses was through the perinatal counselling program at London Health Sciences Centre, yet that program has now been cancelled.

She wrote to the Minister of Health to say, "Now my heart aches for the other mothers and families who have to go through this terrible loss without the support of a social worker on site at LHSC."

She wrote to the LHSC about the decision and asked: "Will there be a gap in counselling services that are critical for parents enduring perinatal loss? What will happen to future perinatal loss patients? Will they be referred to the care of a general social worker that has multiple portfolios? I worry about overburdening of work which may compromise the quality of care. How much of a priority would perinatal loss patients be given?

"The motivation for this letter is my fear for the future parents-to-be that may experience the loss of a baby. As if the grieving process is not difficult enough, there is a significant amount of administrative paperwork that needs to be completed. Feeling numb from all the emotions and stress, getting introduced to an onsite perinatal counsellor placed me in the right direction to get help. I cannot imagine where I would be without the continuous counselling I received from London Health Sciences."

London Health Science Centre is certainly not the only hospital in this province that is dealing with the impact of the Liberal government's funding freeze. Let's hope that passing Bill 141 will force the government to restore some of the funding that has been cut so that the needs of women like my constituent Nicole Hackney can be addressed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Congratulations to the member from Eglinton—Lawrence for bringing this forward today. When he was speaking, he challenged us to contact the hospitals in our area to see just what services we had, and I did that. I reached out and was told by the CEO of the hospital in Windsor where we still do births, "We have social workers and chaplains and crisis support," but it's time-limited and if the problems persist, the women and families would be redirected to community mental health or a similar agency.

That drives home the point that the member was trying to make: that there is no coordinated program across the province, and it highlights the need for a comprehensive and coordinated plan that is available to all.

My wife and I, more than 30 years ago—she had a fallopian ectopic pregnancy, and it took quite a while after that for her to get pregnant again. I think it was almost six years between my son and my daughter because of that experience.

I was reminded just recently: A neighbour family member had a little boy who had a bit of a fever. He went to bed—I think he was two or three—and passed away overnight. Apparently there's something called a fever

seizure, and we're hearing more and more about it. Some might be passed off as SIDS. The fever spikes overnight and they go into seizure and pass away.

So I know counselling will definitely be in order in that situation. We didn't think of counselling back in our day, but I see the need for it. I certainly support the bill.

Again, I congratulate the member from Eglinton-Lawrence for bringing this forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 26, 2015, I am now required to put the question. Mr. Colle has moved third reading of Bill 141, An Act to require research to be undertaken and programs to be developed for pregnancy loss and infant death and to proclaim October 15 as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

MENTAL HEALTH STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT DES LOIS RELATIVES À LA SANTÉ MENTALE

Mr. Hoskins moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 122, An Act to amend the Mental Health Act and the Health Care Consent Act, 1996 / Projet de loi 122, Loi visant à modifier la Loi sur la santé mentale et la Loi de 1996 sur le consentement aux soins de santé.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I look to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to lead off the debate.

1730

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member from Halton.

The Mental Health Statute Law Amendment Act was introduced in response to a decision of the Ontario Court of Appeal. The Court of Appeal declared that part of the Mental Health Act is in breach of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The court found that the Mental Health Act overly restricted the liberties of long-term, involuntarily detained patients. The Mental Health Act did not provide for a regular review of the conditions of a patient's detainment to ensure that it would be the least restrictive possible within the circumstances that required their detention.

As such, the Court of Appeal gave our government until December 23 of this year to address this important issue. If the changes are not enacted by then, there would be no legal authority to detain civilly committed patients. This would be an issue, because these patients that we're talking about today are people who are at risk either to themselves or to others as a result of their mental illness and they need our support.

What we have had to consider carefully with these proposed amendments is how we balance the rights of individuals with the need to protect public safety. Currently, the Consent and Capacity Board only has the authority to release or to continue to detain involuntarily detained long-term patients. There's no middle ground. The changes that we've proposed would enhance the powers of the Consent and Capacity Board to hold hearings regularly and to tailor the detention of those patients according to the individual.

The Consent and Capacity Board would be able to make orders for patients, such as additional privileges, access to the community, transfers to different facilities, or perhaps vocational interpretation and rehabilitative services. Our government believed it was important to consult and hear from stakeholders on the Mental Health Act and the proposed changes, so we consulted with stakeholders that would be directly affected by our amendments.

We consulted with the Consent and Capacity Board. We consulted with Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council. We consulted with the psychiatrists and chiefs at CAMH, Waypoint, The Royal Ottawa and Ontario Shores. We also consulted with the Ontario Hospital Association's mental health council and many others across the sector.

When public hearings were held on Bill 122, we were happy to hear from a wide range of stakeholders and we ensured that their voices were heard. We did that whether they were advocating for patient liberties or community safety: We heard them. That's why we introduced government amendments to respond specifically to the issues raised. We amended the legislation to add "prescribed person" to sit on the Consent and Capacity Board. This regulatory power would allow the Lieutenant Governor in Council to specify additional professionals to the Consent and Capacity Board in the future. By giving our government regulatory authority, we can properly consult and decide precisely which professions should be added now and in the future without having to reopen the Mental Health Act.

We also added additional situations in the legislation where patients would receive rights advice. We believe this better protects patients' liberties and provides patients with the information that they need to make decisions about their health.

We also proposed necessary amendments to clarify that a patient can only be transferred to another facility if they themselves approve such a transfer. Our government believes that it's crucial to the patient that their voice and their needs are honoured.

Our government understands that we need to do more for people in need of mental health and addictions services. Through our mental health and addictions strategy, we're broadening and deepening our efforts to provide increased support for Ontarians of all ages who experience mental health or addictions challenges. We've established a Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council to advise me on the strategy's prior-

ities and investments; to promote collaboration across sectors; and to report annually on the strategy's progress.

Mr. Speaker, we're committed to working with all of our partners across the system to ensure the best possible outcomes for people with mental illness.

These amendments to the Mental Health Act are extremely important. They are not only a direct response to the Ontario Court of Appeal's decision, but they further affirm our government's commitment to patients' rights as well as to community safety. So I urge all members to support our proposed amendments to the Mental Health Act.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm pleased to recognize the member for Halton.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and speak to the proposed changes to the Mental Health Act. The amendments the government has laid out in Bill 122 would offer patients improved care while also strengthening their rights. These are important changes designed to protect the freedom of patients who are detained for longer than six months in a psychiatric facility. At the same time, they would ensure that patients continue to get the best possible care.

The government realizes its responsibilities to protect and care for some of our most vulnerable people. The issues addressed in Bill 122 are sensitive and complex and must take into account personal freedoms and safety. The improvements to the Mental Health Act are in compliance with a ruling made by the Ontario Court of Appeal. The court struck down a provision of the act that allowed a person to be detained in a psychiatric facility for longer than six months, declaring it in breach of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The court gave until December 22, 2015, to make the amendments to the Mental Health Act, and the government has been quick to take action. In its ruling, the court said the Mental Health Act did not provide for a regular review of the conditions of a long-term patient's continued detention. That meant there was no way to ensure that it would be the least restrictive within the circumstances that require detention. This is why Bill 122 is so important. It's about ensuring that people's basic rights are respected when they are detained for mental health issues and safety.

The proposed amendments would enhance the abilities of the Consent and Capacity Board. They would allow the board to make certain orders related to patients who have been in a facility as an involuntary patient for longer than six months. This includes making it possible to detain a patient on a certificate of continuation. That would allow a patient who has been in a psychiatric hospital for over six months to be detained for an additional three months. It would also allow for further certificates if the patient continues to meet the test for involuntary detention under the Mental Health Act.

In order to ensure that long-term involuntary patients have their liberty interests protected, the Consent and Capacity Board would also be given a number of powers. These include the ability to:

—transfer a patient to another psychiatric facility, as long as the patient does not object;

—place the patient on a leave of absence if it's advised by a doctor;

—direct the officer in charge to provide different security levels or different privileges inside or outside the facility;

—direct the officer in charge to provide supervised or unsupervised visits into the local community; and

—direct the officer in charge to provide vocational, interpretation or rehabilitative services.

These are necessary changes that I am proud to see our government making. The amendments give the CCB the tools they need to protect the liberty interests of long-term involuntary patients. But that's not all. The amendments also provide additional opportunities for patients to get advice about their rights, including when a certificate of continuation is issued. Professional advice will also be available when the officer in charge of a psychiatric hospital has requested that a patient be transferred to another facility, and help will be offered when the officer in charge is applying to change or cancel an order made by the board.

If passed, the amendments would allow doctors and nurse practitioners to take part in non-certificate-of-continuation hearings, and, if necessary, the Lieutenant Governor in Council would be able to designate additional people to sit on CCB panels for non-certificate-of-continuation hearings.

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Mental health impacts the lives of so many Ontarians and their loved ones. These amendments are intended to ensure that patients who require long-term, involuntary care get the best and most appropriate care we can offer them.

Statistics show a high proportion of people with mental health issues are some of our most vulnerable. According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, a high percentage of patients are youth, low-income or even homeless.

I urge all members to support passage of these amendments, which seek to improve the lives and the care of so many people who need support.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments? Questions and comments?

Before I call for further debate, I'd like to welcome to the Legislature Mr. Derek Fletcher, who served in this Legislature in the 35th Parliament. Welcome, Mr. Fletcher. Good to see you again.

Further debate?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm glad to be standing up for Bill 122, the Mental Health Statute Law Amendment Act, 2015. I have a few comments to be made through the process of the bill and the end result after going through committee.

Unlike the last bill I just spoke to, which was a great idea of Mr. Colle's—not to say this bill was not a good idea; however, I have to put on my critic's hat and look at

where the process failed and point out where we could have made some improvements with Bill 122.

Mental health is a serious illness that affects every community throughout the province, and it does have drastic effects to not only those affected but family members and communities as a whole. I think it's important that we continue to have the opportunity to update our mental health laws in every avenue we get a chance to do it. Unfortunately, the Mental Health Act isn't open that often, and there's lots to be done in order to ensure improvement in our system. I think that was quite the topic of discussion in second reading: the fact that it's been 15 years since the act was opened up, and there are many groups and ideas out there that want to come forth to make the necessary changes. Our Legislature even had an all-party select committee which came forth to create changes to the Mental Health Act.

I'll read part of what was sent to me by a stakeholder. In fact, this government itself, in 2010, the all-party Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, led by the Minister of Labour, Kevin Flynn, who wasn't the minister at the time; Dr. Helena Jaczek, who wasn't a minister at the time and now is Minister of Community and Social Services; MPP Liz Sandals, who at the time was not the Minister of Education, but is now; and Jeff Leal, who is now the agriculture minister—they were all on this committee. "They presented their final report and the committee acknowledged the excessive and unnecessary suffering committed under the current legislation and expressed certainty that these harms could be avoided through legislative and policy changes that ensure that involuntary admission must also entail treatment."

This was an opportunity, in the mental health bill coming forward, to implement that recommendation from the all-party Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, to make a better change to the legislation in this province and ensure that those who are in our hospitals do get the treatment that they need, so that they can improve their lives and reintegrate back into our communities and be, again, strong members of our communities. Unfortunately, we missed the boat. And in fact, our party put forth an amendment to add that in, but unfortunately, we were ruled out of order, which—I'm not going to judge the Chair or not, but that was his ruling at the time. It's unfortunate, because we could have made some progress where mental health was concerned.

This is a government that has always been saying that they've been open and transparent. This is where I'll have to state the opposite of what they say about being open and transparent, because what we learned during the committee process was something that is quite concerning. This bill is dealing with Mr. P.S., a patient at one of the hospitals. The court struck down—said it was unconstitutional and they had to make some changes.

They had a year to create this bill. That's what the government's intention was at the start. It was saying why it was so late. It was introduced on September 23, I

believe, in the Legislature. We naturally said, "Well, what took you so long to introduce this bill?" Now we have to rush it through because it has to be passed and receive royal assent in the short time period from today in order to ensure that a number of those in our hospitals aren't released.

The government's retort at the time, during second reading, was the fact that it took so long to write the bill and get it right and bring it forward. We took that as, "Fine. That's what the government is saying. That's the retort to it."

However, during committee, one of the first deputants was the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Questions were asked: "Did you meet with so-and-so group? Did you meet with this other group?" Their response was, "No, we didn't."

The member from the third party asked for a list of those whom they met with and consulted in creating this bill. We got this list. They met with the Ministry of the Attorney General; the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee; the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care; the Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office; the Consent and Capacity Board; and the Ontario Review Board. They met with those in March, and again on August 6 with the Consent and Capacity Board. They met with the Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council in April and in July. They met with four chief psychiatrists in the province on April 13.

After that there were no other consultations with anyone until August, when they met with the Ontario Hospital Association mental health council. Other than that there were no other consultations until after the bill was tabled.

After the bill was tabled, they met with the Ontario Medical Association. Instead of including OMA, the doctors—I'm sure they have a contingent of psychiatrists within the OMA who are experts in the field and who may have some input into how to make this a better law. No bill is ever perfect, and the government did fix the part about Mr. P.S.'s custody. However, they also were making changes to the Consent and Capacity Board at the same time. So they were making other changes outside of what they needed to do in order to justify with the courts that patients will have their liberty in our hospitals.

They met with doctors after they introduced the bill. Basically, they're saying to the OMA, "This is what we have; what do you think about it now?" instead of being open and transparent and working with groups.

What's even more shocking is that they didn't meet with the Coalition of Ontario Psychiatrists until mid-October. They didn't meet with legal aid until October 29. They didn't meet with the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly until November 2. By that time, second reading had already finished and we were getting prepared for committee. They didn't meet with the Canadian Civil Liberties Association until November 9. They didn't meet with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's Empowerment Council until November 12. And they didn't meet with the Registered Nurses' Association until

November 26. It seems the government didn't want to have a consultation process with people who could make a difference in this bill. Unfortunately, that's quite a list of stakeholders who were given the document after and said, "Now what? Now what should we do?"

I think it caused some of the amendments to come forth, which didn't all pass, that the different parties brought forward. But at the same time, this could have been a much stronger bill, considering we don't usually have the opportunity to open up the Mental Health Act and make the necessary changes that we need to make.

Mr. Speaker, this little bit that I'm going to give right now is from a doctor from the Coalition of Ontario Psychiatrists, which he brought forward, and his concern was—and it reiterates the fact that the government missed the boat on consulting with proper stakeholders in order to make a stronger bill for the betterment of Ontarians in mental health. He—Dr. Tom Hastings—said, "As the decision came out in December 2014 ... the coalition feels that it's unfortunate that our input wasn't sought earlier, given" that the Coalition of Ontario Psychiatrists represents "over 2,000 psychiatrists, including consultation with other organizations that are involved in delivery of care most affected by this bill, specifically hospital-based psychiatric patients. We feel that we"—the organization—"may have had some suggestions that could have, at an earlier point in time, shaped the direction of the bill perhaps in a way that would avoid some of the harms we're concerned may occur if the bill is not amended."

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Even coming forward, this group was concerned with the changes to the Consent and Capacity Board—that the experience and knowledge of the board and certain constructions of the board may be missing and lacking. They're concerned as to the lack of psychiatrists at every Consent and Capacity Board hearing in order to have that experience, because he said you can't judge whether it's a complex or a simple case until the case comes forward in front of the board. You can't look ahead in time and wonder whether or not it would be an easy case.

The reason why this bill came forward was that Mr. P.S. was detained at a psychiatric facility for over 19 years, and he frequently appeared before the Consent and Capacity Board to have his involuntary status reviewed. The court decision was that he was involuntarily detained under the Mental Health Act after serving a five-year penitentiary sentence for sexual offences involving children.

While the Consent and Capacity Board over the 19 years has consistently affirmed that Mr. P.S. posed a risk of harm and should continue to be an involuntary patient, they commented that P.S.'s disability and the relatively low security risk that he posed to other adults did not warrant his continued detention in the maximum security unit at Waypoint. The Consent and Capacity Board, at these hearings, also repeatedly expressed frustration over the inability to make orders respecting the lack of support services for sign language for Mr. P.S. and the lack of

action on the part of Waypoint hospital in facilitating a transfer to a less secure facility.

On December 23, 2014—so just about a year ago—a decision from the Court of Appeal granted a declaration that the Mental Health Act provisions permitting the committal of a patient on an involuntary basis for more than six months are unconstitutional unless a mechanism were put in place by which the conditions of detention could be addressed. The court struck out the words "or subsequent" from the Mental Health Act certificate process, limiting the detention of involuntary patients in psychiatric facilities to six months.

The bill should have just changed this, if that's all the government was to do: fix this bill in order to make sure that they comply with the law. However, the government went forward with changes to the Consent and Capacity Board arrangement and makeup at the same time. To me, that opened up the process that we are going to make changes to the Mental Health Act, and they had ample time—considering this is the end of December—to actually have the consultations necessary.

Their first consultation wasn't until March 5, and then they took a break all throughout the summer. There are a number of stakeholders which the government did not meet with until either after the first or second reading, so there are a number of ideas that were lost. We believe, over on this side of the House, that everybody has a good idea that we can learn from and work with and possibly make better legislation, and we shouldn't be cutting people out of the process.

We've seen this with the government, who have cut ties with the OMA—made \$800 million in cuts this past year to them and are no longer talking, really, on issues that pertain to the betterment of our health care system. The government, quite frankly, has to do a better job with regard to that situation.

Interestingly, we had the registered nursing association of Ontario come and speak at committee. One of the ideas that they brought forward, which was an interesting idea, was the nurses' ability to sign a form 1—a nurse practitioner. They have tremendous abilities, nurse practitioners. They're accessible to the public.

What hit home with me is, there's quite a number of places—form 1 is a document that doctors can sign to involuntarily hold someone in a facility in order to get further testing, going forward. I think they can be held for up to two weeks. Right now, in order to get the doctor to sign it—if a nurse practitioner and clinic is holding it, they currently have to track down a doctor, which may not be easy, or they can go through the courts to have that person detained, which isn't necessarily the best route if someone is in need of hospitalization. Usually waiting for the process to go through isn't probably the best way to do it when there are other avenues that could happen.

So there was a great opportunity for adding nurses to sign form 1s, especially nurse practitioners in northern Ontario or rural Ontario, where there isn't quite the abundance of doctors available to be linked to. It would actually increase services throughout the province, and I

think that is one of the better ideas that came forth in this committee. Unfortunately, we didn't get to see that in the bill because the necessary consultation, as I mentioned earlier, with the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario wasn't until November 26, just a few weeks ago, just before committee hearings. So we've already done creation of the bill, the consultation period of the bill, first reading, second reading, and we're in committee, and now they're deciding to ask the nurses their ideas.

Unfortunately, we're going to have to wait until the act is reopened in order to make those changes. As I said earlier, we had the select committee from this Legislature years back which put forth a number of recommendations that have yet to be tabled. Maybe that's an opportunity, now that it's December again, and the government can look at carrying forth and maybe reopening the Mental Health Act. Maybe we can start consultations and come forth with the ability—the Ontario Coalition of Psychiatrists brought forth a number of interesting points that I think would help expand the treatment and help those with mental illness, and I think at the same time the nurses have another great idea and that select committee had a number of ideas that they could bring forth. Hopefully the government has realized that they stumbled a bit on this legislation. They had the opportunity to make better changes for this province, and they made the changes that they felt they wanted to make without really talking to anybody, which seems to be the way this government is progressing further: more of "it's their idea and they'll roll ahead, and we don't really need the necessary time for anyone to have that consultation."

Mr. Speaker, no bill is ever perfect. There are always changes that can be made to it. There are a number of amendments here that were brought forward to com-

mittee. There was quite a lengthy committee period as we went through each clause and made the amendments. Quite a number of them were deemed out of order; there are a lot of changes that these stakeholders wanted to see done, and they were simply out of order. There are some that the third party brought forward which we supported them on and which were simply outvoted at committee because the government does hold a majority in committee as well.

It's unfortunate. We're almost done—what?—a year and a half, or over a year and a half, of this new government in power, and we've already hit no more consulting on bills, omnibus bills coming forward to push their agenda, and time allocation on the majority of bills, limiting the amount of debate and open speech in the Legislature.

You would think that would come from a tired government. Maybe after 12-plus years, this is a tired government. It's a government that, through the Auditor General's report that we've seen last week, definitely shows there are a lot of consequences to financial mismanagement, not only for our province's economy but also in the health care system. This is one bill that probably we could have gotten together on and improved the mental health treatment of those throughout our province.

I'd like to—well, the time is ending, so thank you very much.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until later on this evening, at 6:45 p.m.

The House recessed from 1800 to 1845.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Randy Hillier, Michael Mantha
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Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow
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Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns
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Comité spécial de la violence et du harcèlement à caractère
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Taras Natyshak, Peggy Sattler
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of Ontario**

First Session, 41st Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 41^e législature

**Official Report
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Monday 7 December 2015

Lundi 7 décembre 2015



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 7 December 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 7 décembre 2015

The House recessed from 1800 to 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MENTAL HEALTH STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT DES LOIS RELATIVES À LA SANTÉ MENTALE

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 7, 2015, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 122, An Act to amend the Mental Health Act and the Health Care Consent Act, 1996 / Projet de loi 122, Loi visant à modifier la Loi sur la santé mentale et la Loi de 1996 sur le consentement aux soins de santé.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): When we last debated this bill, the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London had the floor. I recognize the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London to continue the debate.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to wrap up what I was speaking to for the last 20 minutes before continuing on. It was a great dinner and I think I've got my energy back up, so we can finish off my debate.

I really just want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the government had a year to create this bill. They should have taken the time to meet with as many stakeholders as possible, but unfortunately they didn't decide to meet with those stakeholders until after the bill was tabled. Most of the stakeholders were met with after second reading, which was unfortunate because the stakeholders had a lot of input to this bill; they had a lot of amendments to make this bill stronger, more encompassing. Unfortunately, we didn't get to hear that enough during the committee and we didn't get to see it here in debate.

As I finish up my debate, I'm glad Bill 122 is going to pass—they're going to make their time frame. They're making changes to the Consent and Capacity Board, which concerns numerous stakeholders. They should have had the opportunity to allow nurse practitioners the ability to sign form 1s. Those opportunities were missed in this bill. Hopefully the government, going forward, will have the opportunity to bring forth a stronger Mental Health Act bill that will encompass what was said at the stakeholder committee delegations but also will incorporate what came forth from the select committee that this Legislature had a number of years back, which did contain a number of current cabinet ministers at that table.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It's a—how could I say this?—real disappointment to find myself here tonight. I've been in this House for eight years—for eight long years—and for 25 years of a career in health care before that, we knew that we needed to change the Mental Health Act. I was part of the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. We toured the province for over 18 months. We stood united, with representatives from all three parties—five Liberals, three Conservatives and myself from the NDP—and we all agreed that the Mental Health Act had to change. But nothing happened—no follow-up.

Then we had this bill, Speaker. This bill is finally bringing the Mental Health Act to this House. It should be a reason for celebration. So many people have waited for such a long time to see this day finally happen, but do you know what really happened? This bill is here because the court told the Liberal government that the Mental Health Act, the way it is written right now, is not constitutional; it cannot continue. We have to change it. So because the court forced them to change it, they finally brought in Bill 122, the Mental Health Statute Law Amendment Act. But do you know what they did? They brought it in like a thief in the night. They never had any sort of consultation—don't get me wrong; people who follow mental health knew that the court had ordered them to change it. So we waited and waited to see: Are they going to appeal the decision? What are they going to do?

1850

It was in December of last year that this happened. By the time February rolled around, we all knew that they were not appealing, because the deadline for appeal was gone. Everybody expected that there were going to be consultations. What we got, Speaker, was complete silence. No one was consulted—not the people who had brought the case law before; not the people who supported Mr. P.S., who brought this mandatory change; nobody; not a peep; no one.

First reading comes: no member's statement, no ministerial statement—nothing. Second reading finally came, and it came with this huge deadline. You see, Speaker, it's because the court told us that we had until December 23 of this year, so this is in about two weeks and bit from now. Then, the part of the Mental Health Act that gives permission to health care workers to hold people against their wish in a mental health facility was going to be null and void. So for all of the people held on form—and

there are about 300 of them out there—the form was not going to be valid anymore. Believe you me, Speaker, there are some really smart people that are held on form. There are some people who follow what's going on in this House and there are some people that know exactly what's going on, and they know when December 23 is going to be and they know that they were going to be out the door, never to be seen again.

Second reading comes around, and then we have this huge pressure to meet the deadline. For once in eight years, we finally had an opportunity to stand in this House and talk about mental health, to talk about all of the ways that the government, as the steward of our health care system, could change things. This is 2015; the act was written decades ago. Mental health has changed drastically. We don't provide care to people needing mental health services anywhere near the way we did 10 years ago, never mind 20, 30 or 35 years ago. Things have changed, but not the Mental Health Act. The Mental Health Act is stuck in cement and holds everybody back because this is the act that governs what can and cannot happen within the mental health system.

Here we have this bill, this bill that is as small as could be to meet what the court has told us is not constitutional anymore, but you will see that they even missed that. The spirit of what the court has told us basically comes down to: If you're going to hold someone for more than six months on form, which is basically holding people in a mental health facility against their wish, then you have to give them fair hearings. Those hearings would take place every three months. In those hearings, if the Consent and Capacity Board—those are the people who make sure that people that are in a mental health facility for a long time, when they come and listen to them, they would be able to give directives, and those directives would have to be followed.

So—and I can speak from example from my riding—if you want your services in French, then you would go to the Consent and Capacity Board and say, “I've been held on form for six months. I haven't had any services in French for the whole six months that I've been here. I would like to be able to speak French every once in a while.” You see, Speaker, most of the therapy that we do in mental health—sure, there's the pharmacology, the medication, but a lot of it is talk therapy. A lot of people in Ontario, in my riding and in Sudbury, would like to speak French. So this is an opportunity for the Consent and Capacity Board to not only make recommendations but also make sure that those are followed through, that if somebody wants to bring forward a change to their plan of care, if somebody wants to bring forward a change of institution, they would all be able to do that. But do you know what they did, Speaker? They kept this very, very narrow to fix the case that had been brought forward to the Legislature by the court, but the spirit of what the court wanted to say is that anybody who's held against their wish in a mental health institution or hospital in our province should be able to be heard. But that won't be the case, Speaker, because this will only apply to people

who are held on form. Let me tell you, Speaker: There are lots of people in our mental health facilities who are not on form because they don't want to be on form, but they know very well that the minute they pass the threshold of the hospital front door, they are going to be on form, so they stay, but they don't want to have this form applied to them.

All of those people who are in our hospitals for more than six months but have chosen to stay there voluntarily—they won't have access. The court meant to include those people. They meant to give everybody who stayed in our hospitals for an extended period of time the opportunity to be heard; the opportunity to have their day with the Consent and Capacity Board; the opportunity for the Consent and Capacity Board to direct changes to their plans of care, to the levels of care that they stay in, to the services that are provided to them, whether it be a language interpreter, if somebody is deaf; whether it be French-language services, if somebody is French; whether it be a transfer to a different institution if this is something that both the patient and the Consent and Capacity Board—this should apply to people who really, if they pass the threshold of the front door, they will be on form. But no, the government took as narrow an interpretation of the court direction as possible, to the point, Speaker, that I am certain, and many, many other people are just as certain as me, that this bill will be unconstitutional and that we will not have moved an iota forward than where we were.

There are other parts of the bill that are really troublesome to me. You see, Speaker, I live in northern Ontario. We've had a tough time recruiting family physicians, primary care providers and—mind you, thanks to the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, it's becoming a little bit easier. But I still have in my riding 30,000 people who don't have access to a family physician or a nurse practitioner. But I do have three nurse practitioner-led clinics in my riding: one in Capreol, one in Lively and one in Alban. The people who are clients of the nurse practitioner-led clinics: Their primary care providers are nurse practitioners. They are not family physicians; they're nurse practitioners. This is who their primary care provider is. If somebody needs to have a psychiatric assessment through a form, this is the person who would best know them, who could best talk to them and make them understand that they need a psychiatric assessment. But for a reason unknown to me, in 2015, when this government is the one—and I've congratulated them multiple times for bringing in this new primary care model of nurse practitioner-led clinics, but yet they write a bill that would say that it would be a physician who can sign a form so that you have a psychiatric assessment. We're not asking the family physician or the nurse practitioner to do the assessment; we're just asking them to sign a piece of paper that will trigger the assessment.

1900

Those conversations are often very difficult. Usually you face somebody, if you're a care provider, if you're the nurse practitioner, who is in crisis, who doesn't think

that they are in crisis. You face somebody who doesn't really want to have a psychiatric assessment done and the nurse practitioner is about to sign a form. But because the government refused to change "primary care physicians" to "primary care nurse practitioners and family physicians," then you've made a very tense and difficult situation 10 times worse.

We had the head of the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario come as a deputant. She gave us a horrendous example of what happens when a nurse practitioner who is the primary care provider for a patient who is in critical need of a psychiatric assessment cannot refer. By the time you track down a physician who agrees to sign the form—she ended up having to call the police. Her patient had barricaded herself in her apartment. The SWAT team rappelled down the side of the building to break down the door. Really, Speaker? In 2015, we don't see that nurse practitioners should be able to sign those forms? We will go through this rigmarole of calling in the police and escalating a situation that is already really bad for all involved. The patient in need of care certainly is not getting care; she's getting scared out of her mind.

The police officers are not psychiatrists. They are not nurses. They are not physicians. They are police officers. They don't want to be dealing with this; they want the health care system to be dealing with somebody in crisis.

But no, no, no; let's not put the nurse practitioners in there so that they would be able to sign the form. Let's make it that only physicians are able to do this. It doesn't matter that we have 26 nurse practitioner-led clinics in this province, that tens of thousands of people have nurse practitioners as their primary care providers. None of that matters. They were bound and determined to stay with this little wee change to the Mental Health Act and not touch anything else.

Between the time that second reading started and now, quite a few people came forward. They came forward as best they could in the limited time they had. For most of them, Speaker, it was us or a representative of the Conservative Party who phoned them and said, "Did you know that the Mental Health Act is open and is up for debate?"

The Liberals have done a very good job at making sure nobody knew, at making sure that we were not going to talk about mental health, because God forbid we help people with mental illness in this province. God forbid we take mental illness and we make it a priority for this province because we know that we can do better. We know that those people deserve better. None of that, Speaker; none of that. They did not do any consultation whatsoever.

As people started to come and as people started to do deputations, we realized how bad what we were trying to do was going to be. We realized how many loopholes that presently exist could be fixed.

The current bill as it was written: As I said, we tried to move a motion to change "family physicians" to "family physicians and nurse practitioners." It was not to be had, Speaker. Although nurse practitioners are often the most

responsible providers in hospitals, in primary care, in long-term care and in many places where you come in contact with a patient with a mental illness, a patient who may need a form to get a psychiatric assessment—it was not to be had.

We then saw that the review by the Consent and Capacity Board was only going to be available every 12 months. But 12 months is a year. A year is a long time. Lots of things change in my life in a year. Well, lots of things change in a person who has a mental illness and is held on form in a hospital. So we tried to change that to three months, to go from, "You're only allowed to come back in front of the Consent and Capacity Board every 12 months" to "every three months."

Basically, we're dealing with the fundamental issues of liberties. How do we balance our liberties rights versus the right to be well? Because at the end of the day, we want everybody to get better. We want everyone to get care so that they get better, get discharged from hospital, transition into community support and then they transition into wellness again.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association had implored the committee to ensure that these rights are available to individuals at their regular review. This is every three months. They go on to say, "If this committee chooses to delay such access to justice for the individual, an application for one remedy should not create a 12-month bar to applying for a different remedy. The bill requires a correction on this point."

Noa Mendelsohn Aviv told the committee on Monday that "a 12-month lag seems to me very long. It is an unacceptable restriction on access to justice." She went on to recommend that the standing committee allow individuals to make their case every three months at their regular review.

The Mental Health Legal Committee told us, the Legislature, "The proposed amendment in Bill 122 limits the frequency of applications to once every 12 months. From the perspective of the vulnerable person, restricting such application to once a year is not reasonable. A year is a long time to be detained against your wish in a hospital. Bill 122 creates a distinction between a meaningful Consent and Capacity Board hearing every 12 months and potentially what could become a meaningless one in the interim by taking away the opportunity for the patients to apply to the board. It also increases the prospect of long-term patients having to apply to court by way of habeas corpus to enforce a 5.1 order in the absence of a meaningful monitoring of its own order by the Consent and Capacity Board."

These problems could have been avoided by consulting with the mental health committee and by consulting with the civil liberties people, but none of that was done. They were first consulted on November 9. November 9, Speaker: That was six weeks before the deadline by the court and four weeks before this House was to rise. They felt like the government has been disrespectful to the experts in the mental health legal community, and they also go on the record to say that the bill risks being unconstitu-

tional. They want the government members of the committee to have to defend their actions. How can you do that without any consultation with the actual intervenor in the P.S. case prior to the introduction of that bill?

I wanted to put this on the record, Speaker, because you will hear it from many people who asked the exact same question: How could they have done this? How can the government bring forward a bill when there is such a huge pent-up demand from every corner of this province to make changes to the Mental Health Act? They will bring the Mental Health Act forward without talking to anyone at all: not a peep, not a consultation, not a phone call, not a tweet, not an email, not a Facebook message; nothing.

1910

So here we have a part of the bill that says that the patient will be allowed to ask for a change in the way that they are held against their wish, but they'll only be able to do this once every 12 months. They could ask for different things. It could very well be that the example I've given first is the example of somebody who would like to have services in French. It is a right for people in Ontario, when they receive health services, to receive them in French in designated areas of the province. Certainly my neck of the woods is a designated area of the province, but if they ask for services in French, then they wouldn't be allowed to ask for any other changes to their plan of care for 12 months. The other ask may have to do with going from North Bay to Sudbury because they have relatives in Sudbury and they have a circle of care, but no. If they've asked for one thing, Speaker—it doesn't matter if they get it or get it refused. If they've asked for one thing, one variance, they're not allowed to ask for any other variances. It doesn't matter if the two have nothing in common. I don't get that.

Who gets to wait for 12 months to ask for a change to their plan of care? It doesn't seem reasonable. I certainly brought this issue forward and asked, "Why 12 months?" Needless to say, there were no answers coming from the other side. They could not justify why they would keep sick people with mental illness away from being able to request a variance. If they've asked for one thing, they cannot get anything else for the next 12 months. This is the way this bill is written, and this is wrong, Speaker. They will have a hearing with the Consent and Capacity Board every three months, but it will be a very one-sided thing. The Consent and Capacity Board will be allowed to make changes, but the people who are being held, the patients for which the board is sitting, won't be able to ask.

I'd like more of a balance. The people who are held on form—they haven't done anything wrong. They are not criminal. We have not punishing them by holding them against their will. We're holding them against their will so we can provide treatment for them, so that we can help them get better, so that we can care for them. So if we are to be truthful to, "This is not a punishment but this is a way to get you better; this is a way to offer you care," then why won't we let them speak when the Consent and

Capacity Board comes? It will come every three months, because the law says that you will be reviewed every three months, but you yourself won't be able to ask for a variance but once a year.

I don't get it, Speaker. I really don't get it. The people of Ontario are way past that. They understand that people with mental illness need a circle of care around them. They understand that we want those people in our communities; we want them to be able to live among us, learn from them, support them and let them support us. But how can we do this when finally we open a bill that would allow us to change things from where they were to where they should be, but nothing changes? It will be 12 months. A lot of things happen in 12 months.

We went on to talk about having consumers on those panels. Remember, Speaker, we talked about—it's the Consent and Capacity Board that makes those decisions. We had heard, when we had the deputation, that it is vital that the perspective of the patient be reflected on the Consent and Capacity Board. In Nova Scotia, their bill is called the Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act. It stipulates that members of the review board should be appointed from a group of candidates that have expressed interest in mental health issues and preferably are, or have been, consumers of mental health services. Language like this would certainly be welcome in Ontario. So you would have your Consent and Capacity Board, and sure, you need to have psychiatrists and you need to have people with knowledge of the law, and you need to have people who provide the care, but you could also have people with lived experience.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, it's called the Mental Health Care and Treatment Act. It specifies that preference be given to persons who are, or have been, consumers of mental health services when choosing members for their board.

This concept of having a Consent and Capacity Board is used pretty much in all of the provinces in Canada. They have different names, but they basically serve the same purpose. Other provinces have made changes to their mental health acts, the names that they carry, and they were able to bring in people with lived experience. That has been proven positive, Speaker. It has been proven positive to have somebody who has been there. Remember, we're not trying to punish those people; we are trying to help them. We are trying to care for them, to get them to be better. Why not have people who have been there before? They have lots to contribute.

The Mental Health Legal Committee recommends that Ontario adopts the language that has been adopted by the other two provinces, and so did the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly.

The Advocacy Centre for the Elderly made lots of good points, and I will go back to this, but we have to realize that for a lot of people who are held on form we are talking about elderly Ontarians being overrepresented in the people who are held on form in our psychiatric hospitals.

We also tried to bring forward language—and it came from the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly. They had

looked at the proposed language in Bill 122 and said that it is unclear from this whether the intent is that a patient can be transferred over their objection if the Consent and Capacity Board finds that a transfer is in the patient's best interests or that the transfer is likely to improve the patient's condition or well-being.

What we think the bill should do is that, if there is going to be a transfer from one mental health facility to another one, sure, the Consent and Capacity Board would review it, but it would be a mutual agreement. That is, the patient wants to move, the Consent and Capacity Board thinks that it is a good idea for the patient to move, and both agree. But right now when we read the bill, it doesn't look like this. It looks like the Consent and Capacity Board will be able to unilaterally impose the moving of a patient against their wish. I think, and I agree, that what ACE is saying is that the way the bill is written right now, it could lead to confusion and unintended consequences.

The present transfer power in the Mental Health Act does not grant the Consent and Capacity Board the power to transfer a patient over his or her objection, but there is no indication that the government intends to make a drastic change to the Mental Health Act, which would permit a patient to be transferred in such a manner.

If you look at sections 11 and 12 of the bill, depending on how you read it, it seems to be that the government is considering whether or not a patient should be transferred, whether they agree to it or not. So we had put forward an amendment to clarify those sections.

Here, again, I want to say, Speaker, that the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly was first consulted on this bill on November 2, nearly a month and a half after the bill was tabled for first reading. So nobody was consulted while we were drafting this bill, nobody was consulted when the bill was tabled for first reading, and only after we contacted them did they become involved.

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All of these problems with the bill, the clarifications that need to be made, what is the intent of the bill—all of this would have been caught, Speaker, if the government had simply picked up the phone, talked to the experts in the field, and talked to the people who deal with the Consent and Capacity Board day in and day out. They would have been able to tell you some of the problems within the Mental Health Act. But none of that was done, which is a real shame.

We also tried to move another amendment. The Mental Health Legal Committee came for deputation. They told us that the Consent and Capacity Board needs the power to direct that a person be discharged into the community with support and the means of ensuring that all patients will have access to community living and appropriate mental health and other rehab resources, as needed. A lot of the language in the new bill seems to be one of those cut-and-paste affairs that come from people being paroled and come from the justice system. That doesn't work so well for mental health. Some of the language there makes sense in the legal system with a parolee, be-

cause you're talking about somebody who has been in jail, somebody who has been found guilty of doing something wrong, who has been punished for their crime and is now being rehabilitated. None of this applies to a person with mental illness. A person with mental illness never did anything wrong.

Unfortunately, we all know, Speaker, that if a person with mental illness does something wrong, it will make the front page of every paper and the stigma will grow and the discrimination against them. But the truth is that very few people with mental illness ever break the law. They are the victims way more often than they commit any offence. People living with a mental illness get discriminated against and often get violence done against them because they are sick, because they have an illness; but very few of them are able to defend themselves—very few of them—because it doesn't matter where they go, even within the health care system.

When we were on the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions—I see quite a few of my select committee members here tonight—we heard from our hospitals and we heard from our caregivers that people who present themselves with mental illness in the hospital often get discriminated against by the people who are there to give them care. They're often treated with disrespect by the health care professionals that they turn to for help. So to think that when violence is done against them, they will run out and seek protections for their rights—none of this happens. They are the victims, not the perpetrators, of violence in many, many cases. But it doesn't matter.

Parts of the bill are copy-and-paste from the justice system. One good thing I will tell you is that if a judge orders community support to be available to a parolee, this community support becomes available. But if the Consent and Capacity Board says that this person would be able to transition to the community with community resources, well, the community resources in mental health are slim—few and far between.

I can give you a case right now of a small boy; he's about 10 years old. His name is Niko, and his parents live in my riding. Niko has post-traumatic stress disorder from a horrifying trauma he lived as a young child. He was adopted by Canadian parents who tried as much as they could to help him. He's now in need of residential mental health treatment, but there is none of that available in northern Ontario. The only way to get residential mental health treatment for this young boy, who has so much violence inside of him, is to send him to a treatment facility in the south. If he was from Windsor or Oakville or Toronto, this child would have access, but, because he comes from northeastern Ontario, because he comes from in and around Sudbury, the only way for this child to get access is to go through the children's aid society.

Well, the children's aid society—we all know—exists because children are in need of protection. This child does not need protection, Speaker. This child is from a loving family; he has siblings; he has moms that love

him. He's not in danger—his family's not a danger to him. But the only way that a family from northeastern Ontario, from Sudbury, can get residential mental health care for their children, for their son, is to give him up to children's aid.

The one and only link that this child had to his mom, where he was actually able to make contact and get support, is going to be taken away from him because the supports in our community are not available because he happens to come from northeastern Ontario, from Sudbury, and we don't have residential mental health treatment—but they have it down south.

So what we were trying to do with this amendment is to try to give people who have been held on form a bit of reassurance that, if the Consent and Capacity Board says that you are able to transition to the community, they will guarantee that you will have the community support available to you, so that you have a successful transition to the community.

I'm sure that, for a lot of people—and we have hundreds of them in Ontario that are held on form—they could transfer to the community if the right resources were available. Some of them are not ready. I'm not a psychiatrist and I'm not going to second-guess their plan of care. They are people specializing in mental health and psychiatry who do this, but they also work within a system, a system where they know that, if they go to the community, they need a certain level of support. But they know the community support system enough to know that all we can offer them is a wait-list that is months long, services that are patchy at best, services that work some days and that don't the others—not exactly the type of support that can guarantee maximum chances of successful transition to the community.

So that was another amendment we brought forward. That was a copy-and-paste from the judicial system and the parole system that could have worked in the mental health system. It's basically that, if the Consent and Capacity Board said that you need that level of services in the community, then that level of services in the community would have been available to them. None of that passed. It got shot down, never to be heard of again.

We also tried a whole lot to talk about the voluntary stay. That was a crucial amendment: to protect the civil liberties of mental health patients and ensure that everyone held in excess of six months in a mental health facility has access to justice. The Advocacy Centre for the Elderly was very clear in proposing that the Consent and Capacity Board review of detention does not and will not apply to informal or voluntary patients. Nevertheless, they may be held in psychiatric facilities for extended periods of time, making these patients extremely vulnerable and their stay equally deserving of review.

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There are many patients who are not technically involuntarily detained under the Mental Health Act but they are kept in hospitals for extended periods of time. There are many patients who are technically voluntary, but are kept in hospital under the threat of being certified, under the threat of being formed. Here again, that im-

pacts seniors disproportionately. These highly vulnerable informal or voluntary patients may be in hospital against their will, but they will have no mechanism to challenge the condition of their stay in the hospital.

If the involuntary detention provision of the Mental Health Act could not pass constitutional scrutiny by P.S. v. Ontario—this is the case that led us to have to change the Mental Health Act—the situation of patients who have no access to procedures to review their detention at all, as outlined above, will surely fall afoul of section 7 of the charter that guarantees our civil liberties.

I would submit to you, Speaker, that voluntary and informal patients are in the same situation as an involuntary patient who has been detained for over six months. These patients suffer from the same conditions of indeterminate detention which were found to violate the liberty interests of involuntary patients and drew censure from the Court of Appeal—and all without the possibility of any review.

Interjection.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I am told that I have to wrap up, but I don't get the chance to talk about mental illness very often at all, Speaker.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Nickel Belt has the floor, and I'd like to hear the rest of what she has to say.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Speaker. It looks like you and I are the only two people interested in mental health tonight. This is a real shame. We have waited for a long time. A lot of people are listening tonight because they want this government to hear them. They want this government to realize that the Mental Health Act needs to be changed. It needs to be changed because it still will be unconstitutional. It needs to be changed because you never consulted with anybody before you wrote this piece of legislation.

It needs to be changed because the way you have it written now, it will require additional resources from our hospitals. I have calculated quickly about \$20 million more with what they have put in that piece of legislation. Take \$20 million out of care to put it into the function of the Consent and Capacity Board, you have a big impact on clients—and to refuse to accept amendments to protect all patients and ensure access to justice to all.

I am very grateful, Speaker, that you've given me this opportunity tonight to put a few thoughts on the Mental Health Act. I hope this act is brought forward again in a more consultative way so that we can look at the entirety of the act and bring it to the standard of 2015. The patients with mental illness, the people who have waited a long time, deserve nothing less.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions or comments?

Further debate?

Mr. Hoskins has moved third reading of Bill 122, An Act to amend the Mental Health Act and Health Care Consent Act, 1996. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

I wish to inform the House that I have received a deferral notice from the chief government whip requesting that the vote on third reading of Bill 122 be deferred until tomorrow during the normal time for deferred votes after question period, pursuant to standing order 28(h).

Third reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Orders of the day.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The Attorney General has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1936.

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**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

First Session, 41st Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**



**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 8 December 2015

Mardi 8 décembre 2015

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 8 December 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 8 décembre 2015

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

Mr. Steve Clark: Speaker, a point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the member for Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Do we have a quorum, Speaker?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A quorum, please.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members.

The Speaker ordered the bells rung.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): A quorum is now present.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 109, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour, the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be authorized to meet from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. on Wednesday, December 9, 2015, for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That only those amendments to the bill which had already been filed with the Clerk of the Committee at its meeting on Thursday, December 3, 2015, shall be considered and, at 1:15 p.m. on Wednesday, December 9, 2015, such amendments shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto, no 20-minute waiting period pursuant to standing order 129(a) being permitted; and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Wednesday, December 9, 2015. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time

the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, one hour of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Gravelle has moved government order number 60. Back to the minister.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: This is a very important piece of legislation. If passed, it will provide increased fairness to all workers across Ontario. If passed, the Employment and Labour Statute Law Amendment Act would provide more tools to resolve disputes in the fire sector, it would ensure that broader public sector transactions go as smoothly as possible through greater efficiency and stability, and it would help provide a fair, just and efficient workers' compensation system.

The fact is that both parties across the aisle decided that they were going to play some procedural tricks in committee and hold up this important piece of legislation indefinitely. We believe very strongly that it's important we move forward with Bill 109. If one goes back to the last Parliament, the Legislature was frequently ground to a halt and was unable to move forward precisely because of those kinds of procedural manoeuvres from the other parties. Frankly, it now appears that the opposition is actually attempting to do same thing with Bill 109, which is most unfortunate.

Some of the facts of the last Parliament are probably worth relaying. Only 39% of government bills were passed in the last minority government. That does compare to more than three quarters of bills that were passed going back to 1990.

We now do have a new Parliament as of June 2014, and I think the people that put our government in place have sent a pretty clear message: They want our government to get on with the business of governing in the best interests of all Ontarians. Certainly, that's why I stand here today, urging all members in this House to support this motion and help pass this important bill as soon as possible.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Over to the member from Wellington—Halton Hills for further debate.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm glad to be in the Legislature this morning to represent my constituents in Wellington—Halton Hills and also to discharge my responsibilities as the official opposition critic for the Minister of Labour, which means I have the opportunity to speak first in response to this time allocation motion and, I gather, when the bill is called for third reading.

I must say that I beg to differ with the minister who just spoke, who moved the time allocation motion, who stated that both opposition parties were tying up the bill in committee. Unfortunately, I would have to say that he's been misinformed. Whoever has reported that to him has given him false and erroneous information.

The fact is, we have had one day of clause-by-clause consideration at committee starting at, as you know, Mr. Speaker, 9 o'clock in the morning till 10:15, and then resuming at 2 o'clock in the afternoon till 6 o'clock.

It is true that we, as opposition members, moved amendments to the bill, which is our responsibility in committee, I think. If we have ideas and suggestions, if we have concerns, and in fact, if the public hearings that were part of the process too brought forward ideas and suggestions from organizations that have an interest in the bill—thoughtful suggestions—I think we as members of the Legislature have an obligation to listen to those public hearings, surely, and then in turn reflect some of what we've heard and some of our own ideas into the process through the clause-by-clause consideration, where amendments are moved, debated and voted upon.

Now, it is true that the debates were quite lengthy in the public hearings last Thursday, and they did drag on to some degree. I think if you check the time that was taken up by the opposition parties, certainly one party—the New Democrats—was taking more time, but I'm not saying that to criticize. They had concerns; they have an opportunity to present those concerns at committee.

It's interesting that the government is now saying that one day of clause-by-clause on a bill is a delay, that there's a delay going on, that the opposition is using procedural tricks to slow down the process. Mr. Speaker, that is fundamentally false. It's not a factual statement. Yet, this government appears to be becoming so arrogant that they think that one day of clause-by-clause is an undue delay in the process. Then they stand here the very next week, the Tuesday following, and accuse us of delay.

I would ask them to think about that and reflect upon it, because certainly I think most members of the government side would agree that there has to be some sort of a public process before debates are concluded and that the opposition has a role to play. There are a number of members on the government side who have never served in opposition, but there are quite a few who have, and I think there needs to be a greater understanding on the government's side of what the role of the opposition is and, in turn, our responsibility to have a democratic

process for consideration of legislation, leading to a final vote at third reading, and not just ramming a bill through the House.

0910

Now, it's also true that the government is increasingly using time allocation as a means of expediting the passage of legislation. I certainly would admit that, when we were in government, we, from time to time, used time allocation too, especially in the final months of our term. But, I also think, to the extent that it is used routinely, it is a diminution of the democratic process. Again, I would ask the members on the government side to reflect upon these comments because I think they're important ones that need to be considered.

Bill 109: Of course, as I said, we haven't had a complete opportunity to discuss the bill in terms of clause-by-clause discussion, but this time allocation motion would send it—in fact, I should put it on the record. This time allocation motion, as I understand it, was tabled late yesterday afternoon, which means it's printed on the order paper, which appears on our desks the next day, which is today. I hadn't had a chance to see the time allocation motion until I came into the House this morning at five to 9, and now we're debating it. There's something funny about that kind of a process too. I realize we're getting close to Christmas, and there's always a mad dash to conclude the things that the government wants to conclude, but there was really no indication, up until a few days ago, that the government was insistent on getting Bill 109 passed before Christmas. It seemed to be that the government was prepared to allow a reasonable process. But, of course, as we find out today, that proves not to be the case.

I want to say that schedule 1 of the bill, the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, which creates amendments to the—sorry; the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, is a schedule that we support in the official opposition. Our new leader, Patrick Brown, has, for years, had very a strong working relationship with the professional firefighting services. Even though he served in the House of Commons, he had a lot of involvement and interaction with the professional firefighters in the province of Ontario, and certainly in his riding. He has a high degree of respect for the work that they do, as I do, and, I think, as all members of the House do. But we certainly want to work in a co-operative and constructive way with the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association and work with them to ensure that public safety is paramount. We do support schedule 1.

I have, for years, as you know, Mr. Speaker, stood up in support of two-hatter firefighters, and I'm pleased that there is at least some level of legislative protection for two-hatter firefighters as a portion of Bill 109. That was certainly my interpretation when I read the bill initially.

I want to make reference to AMO's presentation to the committee, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. Unfortunately, they didn't get a chance to be there personally, but they sent in a written presentation. They said:

“As we understand it, Bill 109 would amend the FPPA to address membership in firefighter associations in a

number of ways. First, the FPPA would be amended to expressly permit associations to require the inclusion of closed-shop language in a collective agreement, which already exists in many of our members' fire collective agreements. This includes features such as mandatory association dues deductions and provisions requiring membership in the association or giving preference of employment to members of an association.

"However, these new provisions are balanced"—and they emphasize the word "balanced"—"by the inclusion of provisions designed to protect individual firefighters. These protections include where a firefighter has been expelled or suspended from their association, or who have been denied membership or had it withheld from them. The basis for these protections is a number of protected grounds, including, for example, engaging in 'reasonable dissent' within the association. These provisions may assist municipal governments that employ full-time firefighters who also serve as volunteer firefighters in other municipalities, who are often referred to as 'double-hatters.'"

Again, Mr. Speaker, double-hatter firefighters tend to be full-time professional firefighters who work for a city fire department, but might live in a small town nearby. They may want to act as part-time firefighters, or what we used to call volunteer firefighters, in their home communities on their days off. In some cases, going back to even before the introduction of my bill, Bill 30, in 2002, there were situations where the professional firefighters' union was threatening to expel two-hatters from the firefighters' union, which would have meant the termination of their full-time employment. It was a very heavy-handed sanction that was being threatened against—not in every case—but in a number of cases where two-hatters were wanting to continue to serve in their home communities.

I stood up for the two-hatter firefighters in a private member's bill that came to be very controversial and, in the end, was defeated by this Legislature, unfortunately, but received more hours of debate than any other private member's bill in the history of the province of Ontario going back to 1950. We stopped looking at 1950.

The point we made was supported by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Fire Fighters' Association of Ontario—which is the volunteer, or part-time, association—and the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs, three important stakeholders in the fire service, who all agreed with my bill and spoke out in favour of it publicly, even though it was very controversial. Also, the fire marshal of the day, Bernard Moyle, actually came to the legislative committee—the province's fire marshal, the senior fire official in the province—and spoke in favour of legislative protection for two-hatter firefighters.

The irony is, 13 years later, here we are and the Liberal Party that spoke so strongly against my bill in 2002 and worked hard against it, with the exception of a couple of their members who supported my bill on a free vote at third reading, are now in government and bringing in some measure of legislative protection for two-

hatter firefighters. I hope that it is the protection that we need, and I would suggest that it's a good day for public safety in rural Ontario if indeed it is.

The other schedule of the bill that I think needs to be talked about is the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, or PSLRTA as it's sometimes called. When we were in government, in 1997 we brought in legislation to require a vote when there was a merger of two workplaces coming together, to determine which union would represent the workers in the merged workplace. We call this merger-driven representation votes. Many of the public sector unions are very concerned about this provision in Bill 109. They expressed their concern at committee, and we listened. In many cases, public sector unions are saying that they want to continue the opportunity to have a free vote when there is a merger-driven process.

We know that the Minister of Health is talking about substantial restructuring of the health care system. He's talked about that publicly. It would appear that there is a restructuring of the health care system on the horizon. I think that's why many of the public sector unions are very concerned about this. They want to have a say if indeed two workplaces are merged, allowing each individual member a secret ballot vote to decide which union they want to represent them. The government is saying no.

We argued at committee that this is, again, a diminution of democratic rights. When you're taking away a vote from someone in the interest of an expeditious decision that may not represent the true interests of the individual members or give them an opportunity to have their say, surely, Mr. Speaker, that, again, is a diminution of democracy in the workplace. That was a view that was supported by a number of the public sector unions that came forward—not all; there are some that are for it, some that are against it.

The New Democrats, when they speak to this time allocation motion—I'm sure the member for Welland will talk about this, but we agree that there should be a continuance of the opportunity for merger-driven representation votes, and it shouldn't just be a slam dunk decision by the government.

In fact, the government is saying, "Trust us. Through regulation, we'll set the appropriate threshold." They've given an indication that if 60% of the workers in a newly merged workplace belong to one union, then that would be the threshold, and then the decision would be made to approve that union as the bargaining agent.

But the fact is, there have been a number of cases over the years—and we've been told at committee and no one has disputed this—that even where there was a clear majority of one union representing the workers in a newly merged workplace, that union didn't necessarily win the vote. Again, this is an issue of serious concern for our caucus.

Of course, what the government has done is brought together three very different issues into one bill. That would be characterized by some as an omnibus bill, Mr.

Speaker, and I think fairly so. It's not a massive omnibus bill, but there are three very different labour issues brought together: the first one, the Fire Protection and Prevention Act amendments, which we support; the second one, the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, which we do not support; and then the third area is the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act revisions.

0920

I hope I can find the presentation that was made to the committee—it was a written presentation, albeit, by the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters. They were just here at the Legislature, and I'm sure they met with many MPPs on the government side. They're one of the most important trade organizations in the country, really, representing our manufacturers all across Canada. They do an outstanding job. They've been in existence for, I think, 100 years, representing the interests of manufacturing, which is one of the pillars of our economy and hopefully will be in the future—and, as I said, has been in the past. Unfortunately, we've lost more than 300,000 manufacturing jobs in recent years, in part because of deliberate and conscious provincial government decisions, whether it comes to hydro, regulation or tax, and the anticipation of higher taxes because of the massive debts and deficits that have been run.

The Canadian Manufacturers' Association, now called the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, did express concerns about this bill and this provision of the act, schedule 3, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act. They said this to us at committee:

“With respect to Bill 109, CME is objecting to the proposed changes outlined in schedule 3 of the bill which amends the” Workplace Safety and Insurance Act by:

“—creating a new offence for employer claims suppression

“—increasing the maximum penalty for corporations on conviction from \$100,000 to \$500,000

“—the potential for the creation of new administrative penalties by way of regulation.”

They go on to say—and I'm going to have to paraphrase here because I'm running out of time—that they believe that the proposed legislative amendments are the result of unsubstantiated views that claims suppression is a prevalent activity which employers are using to keep workplace safety and insurance costs down. “It would appear that anecdotal evidence, not substantiated by any reliable studies, is serving as the impetus for new claims suppression penalties which we believe are unwarranted and unnecessary,” and they go on in great detail.

We also heard from one of the, I would say, most knowledgeable experts on workers' compensation issues in the province of Ontario, Les Liversidge, who made a presentation at the committee and who again made the point that these allegations of claims suppression by employers are largely unsubstantiated by any empirical evidence. There may be some anecdotal examples that the government might cite, and I'm told that the Ministry of Labour believes that this is happening and that there need to be changes to reflect that. But we still say,

where's the evidence? We haven't seen it. The government hasn't tabled it, the Ministry of Labour hasn't tabled it, the WSIB hasn't tabled it. So I question whether this is really an issue or if it's just an issue that the government is making up to try to make it appear that employers are all bad and they're all out there to abuse their employees, and it's part of a left-wing government's agenda to make employers look bad so as to continue to bring forward new regulation, higher tax and bigger government that we can't afford.

The fact is, in our free market economy, companies need to make money in order to reinvest and create jobs, and unfortunately, I'm not sure this government understands that in full. Companies need to make money. There's nothing wrong with companies making a profit. We on this side of the House understand that; I'm not sure that the current government does. They think that business is a cow that can just be milked morning and night. They don't seem to understand that if we want to have a private sector economy, we have to grow the private sector economy, we have to encourage the private sector economy, we have to have policies which encourage investors to want to invest in the province of Ontario, to create the new jobs we need. Unfortunately, I would have to say that is severely lacking. I have seen, unfortunately, in recent months and years with this government, not necessarily a deliberate and conscious effort to kill entrepreneurialism in the province, but the cumulative effect of all their policies is doing just that.

Mr. Speaker, I am opposed to this time allocation motion. Unfortunately, I don't have any more time, because we're going to cede the floor to the NDP—but at the same time, time allocations should not be used routinely in this House. Every time it is used, it is a diminution of the democratic process and the process that should be employed in this House in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'm happy to get up and talk about this time allocation motion around Bill 109 that we're here for this morning.

I heard the minister, who spoke very briefly to this issue—in fact, the members on the government side of the House really have not spoken to Bill 109 at any length. I think the most anyone has spoken about it was five minutes.

This is a very important bill. Unfortunately, it's one of those small omnibus bills that has a poison pill in the middle of it. One piece of it, schedule 1, addresses protections for firefighters similar to those protections afforded to most workers in the province under the Ontario Labour Relations Act, and it brings firefighters in line with that.

We heard from the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association at the deputations back on November 26, and they were very supportive of the legislation, which is going to give them some badly needed protections. However, they weren't happy that in the middle of this bill there is a schedule 2 which is attacking workers' rights to have a vote when there's a merger or an amalgamation in

the public sector—that could be a municipality, a hospital, the health care sector or the school system.

This morning, the minister talked about this bill bringing fairness to workers in this province. The PSLRTA legislation has been in place for 20 years, and there wasn't anybody who didn't think that it was fair. This was legislation brought in under the Tories. It had some problems in the beginning, but over 20 years the processes have been worked out in amenable ways through decisions of the Ontario Labour Relations Act. The process works quite smoothly when there are votes.

What is problematic here today is the fact that we're in the midst of time—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Stop the clock, please.

I'm having a little difficulty hearing our speaker this morning. If you have a conversation going on, I would ask you to please lower your voice so that I can still hear our speaker and show her the respect that she should have. Thank you very much.

Please continue.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Apparently the members on the government side really aren't interested in protecting workers in this province, or they're not paying any attention to the rights of workers in this province.

Here we find ourselves with a very important bill that is going to affect hundreds of thousands of workers in this province. There are 444 municipalities, another hundred hospital systems, 500 nursing homes, 90-some school boards in the province that could be impacted by this legislation. In any one of a merger and amalgamation, which we see more and more as this government continues to cut budgets by 6% and freezes budgets in health care—we're going to see more of these mergers as the government does their health care transformation. Health care workers, in particular, are going to be impacted by this legislation.

In the past, workers had the right to go to a vote under PSLRTA. If you had 60% of the people unionized and 40% of the people not unionized, you went to a vote. Or if you had two unions representing the same workers, you went to a vote. What this legislation is proposing is that if one union has 60%, there will be no vote, so workers will no longer have the right to choose the union of their choice.

0930

We feel, and certainly the workers who we heard from at the deputations feel that this isn't fair, and that in fact in every case there should be a vote so that nurses and perhaps education workers, if there was a merger of a school board, municipal workers—both inside and outside municipal workers, in the case of a merger—would have the right to choose the union.

Now, some unions provide better service than others. Some provide some services that other unions don't provide. For example, some unions will do compensation appeals for their members and CPP appeals, where other

unions, because you're not required to provide those services, may not. So when we get to these vote situations, workers in this province have the right to have a look at what services unions actually provide and make their decision based on that.

I can tell you, Speaker, that in my experience—and I participated in, I would say, at least 20 of these PSLRTA votes over the years, when I was working for the Ontario Nurses' Association—in all cases, the union that had the higher percentage of workers didn't necessarily win the vote. There were situations where a union only held 10% of the workforce going in and they actually ended up with a 100% of that classification of worker at the end of the day—maybe because they had a good campaign; perhaps because they provided good service to their members; or because they provided certain services that appealed to the members.

The minister spoke this morning about the opposition parties trying to delay this bill. In fact, we were in clause-by-clause. It was only one day last week. We had a number of important amendments to this bill and we had a number of our members who wanted to get on the record. The member from Kitchener-Waterloo was in to speak on the bill, and the member from Niagara Falls. The member from Oshawa actually spoke twice because she had a lot to say on Bill 109. When we're talking about democracy, I think that it is important for everyone to have the opportunity to debate important bills such as this one.

What we did hear at those deputations on November 26 was that there was only one consultation by the government, which is very concerning to me and to New Democrats. You're putting in a bill that's going to change the face of a voting process for certain groups of people in the public sector and you've only consulted with one stakeholder. I asked that question, Speaker, in those deputations, of each and every person that participated, and there was only one stakeholder that had been consulted. The rest of the stakeholders—OPSEU, CUPE, the Ontario Nurses' Association, CLAC, the Christian Labour Association of Canada—none of those unions who are going to be affected by the changes in this bill were even called, nor were they consulted. The only time they heard about it was once the bill was tabled.

Now, they had been consulted back in 2013, during the budget process. The Minister of Labour had contacted them—or the Minister of Labour's staff, I guess, had contacted them—and at that point, after having those consultations two years ago, they were told that this legislation was not going to be brought forward, that there was no need to bring it forward and that it was a dead issue. Then, once it gets tabled again, they were not consulted at that point in time.

Interestingly enough, we did an FOI to the ministry and what came back was that there was one stakeholder consultation, which we confirmed at the deputations. The Minister of Labour in that FOI said, "There are no problems with respect to PSLRTA," so there was really no need to bring this issue forward. So one has to wonder why in fact the government did bring the issue forward.

So, Speaker, I don't think that there is any undue delay in this process, as the minister indicated from the government this morning, but certainly this is a fundamental change in a process that may actually see a charter challenge at the end of the day.

If I can just share with you, there is some case law on this situation. It was the Mounted Police case in the Supreme Court that found that section 2(d) of the charter guarantees "a meaningful process of collective bargaining" which includes "a process that provides employees with a degree of choice and independence sufficient to enable them to determine their collective interests and meaningfully pursue them." A summary of the case is here as well.

The court noted that the hallmark of employee choice included "the ability to form and join new associations, to change representatives"—as I have talked about this morning—"to set and change collective workplace goals, and to dissolve existing associations," for which there is a process already under the Ontario Labour Relations Act. And accountability to the members of the association is an important element of choice.

Legal experts, Speaker, are of the view that the proposed amendments under Bill 109 to the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act would not stand a charter scrutiny. Depriving union members of the union of their choice on the basis that they fell below an arbitrary minimum percentage of a newly integrated bargaining unit is an unnecessary infringement of their charter right to the union of their choice, so the proposed change is totally unnecessary. There have been no problems under the current provisions, and having a vote without an arbitrary cut-off is consistent with workplace democracy and charter rights.

Now, it's interesting that, at this point, this Bill 109 really only applies to those sectors that I talked about: health care, school boards and municipalities. But, in fact, people are now starting, over the last few days as we've been debating Bill 109, to pay attention in the private sector and in other parts of the public sector.

Just yesterday, actually, I had the opportunity to speak to a couple of long-time labour lawyers here in Toronto who are concerned that this legislation may threaten votes in other public sectors not anticipated under this PSLRTA act, and in the private sector, because, currently, if there are mergers or amalgamations of private businesses across this province and both of those workplaces are unionized and they go to the labour board, the labour board is the body that would order a vote. In those situations, historically, a vote was never ordered unless it was at about an 85% threshold; in some instances, even a 90% threshold.

And so now, in fact, the board, if this bill is passed, may have a look and say, "Well, you know, maybe we should be using this threshold more broadly across this province." And I can tell you that that is perking the ears of many unions across this province. It's a problem today, and I think it's going to be a bigger problem if this legislation is passed.

I want to spend a few minutes, as well, because I believe that this really is an infringement on workers' rights—I want to talk a bit about some of the other things that this government has been infringing on with respect to workers in the province. Just yesterday, we had Michael Prue's tip-out bill. That was a bill that was supposed to protect workers in this province from unscrupulous employers who actually were taking their tips. The member from Beaches—East York put an amendment to his own bill, and that amendment took away the protections that the bill had intended in the first place. It certainly wasn't Michael Prue's bill at the end of the day.

0940

Here again is an infringement on workers in this province who are paid the lowest amount of money of any worker—\$9.55 for a server. Now, this amendment would allow employers to take 3% to 5%—I hear in the restaurant industry, it's generally 2.5%—of their tips to pay the bank service fees if you use a debit card or a credit card. Speaker, if you go into a restaurant, spend \$100 and leave a \$20 tip, that server is now going to lose perhaps 2% or 3% of that \$20 tip.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Who's going to get it?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Well, the employer is going to get it. The owner is going to actually get that tip.

Now, it may not seem like a lot, but if you're serving 20 tables, that could add up to \$5 or \$6 in a day, which could be as much as \$1,000 or \$1,500 in a year for people who are working below the poverty line even when they're working full-time in the restaurant industry or anywhere else.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: How much would an employer make in a year?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Well, how much would an employer make in a year if they had 50 employees all giving them \$5 or \$6 every day they're working?

That is problematic. It is an infringement. It is not protecting service sector employees. It is not what was intended in the bill.

I spoke to a fellow from Ottawa who has been involved with this bill since the beginning, since Michael Prue introduced it back in 2010. He wasn't happy with that amendment. He was happy to see the bill pushed through, but he certainly wasn't happy with that amendment, because all it's doing is taking money out of the pockets of servers and service sector workers in this province.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Sounds like a Liberal thing to do.

Ms. Cindy Forster: It sounds like a Liberal thing. I mean, the Liberals talk about being progressive, right? They're so progressive. But every time they introduce a bill, there's a bill that is either attached to it or embedded in it that isn't quite so progressive. So I think that people need to know that, and that's why we are standing up here talking about why we don't need to time-allocate all of these things and why we need to have more debate on these issues.

I also wanted to talk a bit about another non-progressive bill, Bill 144, in which was embedded the EllisDon

bill. It used to be Bill 74. The Liberals voted against that bill. I think it was the member from—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Monte McNaughton.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Monte McNaughton. I can't remember; maybe you can help me, Speaker.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. He introduced a bill a couple of years ago, Bill 74. It was a bill that would have actually ended a historic contract between EllisDon and some of the building trades—I think UA Plumbers and Pipefitters, sheet metal workers and another group; I can't quite remember who it was. But anyway, this agreement had gone on for 60 years.

That member introduced a private member's bill. The government initially seemed to be supporting it, but at the end of the day, when it came to a vote, they voted against it. They did that because we were going into an election and they needed that support. They didn't need to have that hanging over their head at the time.

But interestingly enough, now buried in Bill 144—the EllisDon bill has been resurrected. It was called the Fairness and Competitiveness in Ontario's Construction Industry Act at the time, but now it's just a schedule. I think it's schedule 12 in Bill 144.

This 60-year-old agreement required EllisDon projects in the Sarnia area to only hire sheet metal and electrical contractors. It applies to every area outside of the GTA and only to the industrial, commercial and institutional sectors.

The Liberals and the Conservatives both supported EllisDon—a major political donor to the Liberals and PCs—to break its contracts with tradespersons who work for the company. EllisDon appealed that decision to the OLRB and then to Divisional Court. The OLRB actually supported the unions in this particular case, and then the Divisional Court overturned the OLRB decision. It then went on to the Court of Appeal, where it got overturned again in favour of the unions. Then the Supreme Court refused to hear it, so the 60-year agreement was still in place.

Well, that wasn't good enough for EllisDon or for the government, and so—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: They're one and the same.

Ms. Cindy Forster: They're one and the same, yes.

So the Minister of Labour then ordered a mediation process. He brought in an arbitrator—a well-respected arbitrator—and they mediated for a couple of weekends, and they thought they had a deal, but at the end of the day, they didn't. It didn't ratify, and you know that those kinds of processes need to have a ratification, they need to have an end. Well, it didn't ratify, and so we find ourselves with this bill back before us in Bill 144.

This is the third bill that I'm talking about that is an infringement on workers' rights here in the province of Ontario, and all of these bills are being time-allocated. The omnibus bill, Bill 144, the vast majority of the amendments yesterday in committee—I went and sat in committee with our finance critic, Catherine Fife, and when we got to 2 o'clock, they just—

Ms. Soo Wong: Four o'clock.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Oh, maybe it was 4 o'clock. Thank you.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It felt like 2.

Ms. Cindy Forster: It felt like 2 o'clock to me, but it was 4 o'clock. At that point, they weren't anywhere through the amendments to the bill, but they just deemed them all to have passed at the end of the day. Many, many schedules, in that very short period of time I was in there—I think there were probably eight or nine schedules passed in about 10 minutes, without any opportunity for any party to actually debate the issues.

Anyway, back to schedule 12: We fast-forward to November 2014, and we find ourselves back with this EllisDon situation. During debate, New Democrats pointed out that if EllisDon genuinely felt that there was a competitive disadvantage because of the OLRB decision in 2012, it had its recourse through collective bargaining. Really, that's how unions and employers—I mean, that's why you join a union. You join a union so that you actually have the right to negotiate.

If I take us back to the tip-out bill, that's the other amendment that is problematic in it. The new regulations, the new parts of the bill that would have advantaged service sector workers—the lowest-paid workers in the province—if you happen to work in a workplace that is unionized, those new provisions do not apply to those workers until the collective agreement expires. This is different from what happens to every other worker in this province. If the Employment Standards Act makes an improvement, that supersedes the collective agreement if it's better. If it's worse, the collective agreement supersedes. But for these workers in the service sector, they're going to have to wait to make sure that their employers don't steal their tips until the collective agreement expires.

In today's world, that could be a three- or four-year collective agreement. In the old days, when the member from Timmins–James Bay and I were negotiating collective agreements, they might have been one-year or two-year collective agreements, because things were good in those days and you could actually negotiate some good pensions and benefits and wage increases, unlike today, when wages are frozen for five years here in the Legislature.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Longer than that.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Longer than that. How many years?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I've been here 26, and I've been frozen all but five.

0950

Ms. Cindy Forster: All right, so the member from Timmins–James Bay said that his wages have been frozen for 20 of 26 years here in the Legislature.

There were advantages to having short-term collective agreements: You could go back and get some really good working-condition improvements for your workers. But in this situation under this tip-out bill, these workers may be in a collective agreement that they're stuck in for the

next three years and not see any improvement in their tips during that period. Thankfully, though, if that's the case and this passes, they won't have to pay those bank and credit card fees for three years either. In any event, I'm told that there's very low unionization in the service sector, so hopefully it won't impact that many employees.

I think you can get that the theme here, Speaker. The reason we're talking about Bill 109, schedule 12 of Bill 144 and Bill 12—the tip-out bill from the former member from Beaches–East York, Michael Prue—is because workers' rights are being infringed upon in each one of these pieces of legislation. We don't know why this progressive Liberal government wants to negatively impact workers in this province.

As I said, potentially hundreds of thousands of workers in the public sector could be affected by Bill 109, thousands of workers are going to be affected by Bill 12, and we know that there are thousands of construction workers as well who are going to be impacted by Bill 144, schedule 12, when the government ends this 60-year agreement with EllisDon.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Save me some time.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Yes, okay.

I'm going to wrap up now. I just want to go back, though, and address the fact that the minister, who spoke for about three minutes to Bill 109 this morning, accused the opposition parties of trying to stall this bill. I think it's important for each and every one of us to get on the record about how these workers' rights will be infringed upon and negatively impacted, perhaps for the rest of their lives, by the introduction and the passing of these bills.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's unfortunate that we find ourselves with yet another time allocation motion. What a bad way of doing legislation.

There is some legitimate concern on the part of New Democrats on one particular section of this bill. Rather than the government saying, "Okay, fine. We get it. We'll hive off that part of the bill and deal with the rest of the bill in order to move it forward"—because, quite frankly, we can support most of what's in this bill; there's one particular section that we don't support—the government decides it's going to have to do things in this way.

I just think it's a darn shame because what we end up with is legislation being passed through this House in a very expedited manner that doesn't give the opportunity for those people in our society who have something to say about what the government is doing here to have that say.

In a parliamentary democracy, we are very blessed. We have a process by which we don't just have a debate at second reading, which gives members the ability to speak to the particular bill, but, more importantly, we have the ability for people to be heard in the committee process.

There used to be a time in this place not that long ago when, if bills were somewhat controversial or completely

controversial, there would be a negotiation between the opposition and the government in order to allow the bill to travel in the intersession so that those people who wanted to say something on the bill had an opportunity to say it. The government, with its majority, always got what it wanted. That's the way the parliamentary process works. They have a majority of seats on the other side of the House and of course they would get their way in the end, but the public would at least be heard.

I do distinctly remember Kathleen Wynne, our Premier, saying when she was elected that she wanted to have conversations with Ontarians; she wanted to consult the people of Ontario; she wanted people to feel as if this was their government and they had an ability to have their say.

What we're seeing with the Liberals is essentially what we used to see under the Tories: If they don't agree with the government, time-allocate and don't give the public an opportunity to have their say. In fairness to the Harris government, even they travelled bills that were controversial, because the—

Mr. Steve Clark: What about the Rae government?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, no, I'm just saying that even under the Harris government, who time-allocated at a fair degree—they were probably the record keepers of the time allocation motions—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Fair as in the opposite of unfair?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Fair as the opposite of unfair. But I would say that at least Mr. Harris allowed the bill to travel. There would be this process by which the opposition would sit with the government House leader. They would have a discussion and say, "Okay, that particular bill, we get. You have legitimate concerns." There would be some time afforded for the public to have their say, and the bill would travel in the intersession so that those people who were interested in saying something on a bill had a chance to do it.

This government, when it comes to that, says that no, they know best, they have a majority, they can do what they want and they don't need to listen to the public unless the public is saying what they want to hear. When the public is saying something opposite to what the government wants to hear, or is oppositional in some ways to what the government is trying to do, this government says, "No, you know, this long-standing tradition of parliamentary democracy that has been developed over hundreds of years and gives the public the right to have their say, we're going to have nothing to do with it. We're going to utilize our parliamentary democracy by way of a time allocation motion, to not only limit but stifle the ability of the public to have their say."

Now, I said at the outset that I understand there's a majority here. The government has a majority of seats in this Legislature. Do I have any doubt that this bill would pass no matter what? Absolutely, I understand that it's going to pass. But at least have the public have their ability to come before a committee, and hopefully a committee somewhere out in Ontario where people can come forward and be able to give their view. Who knows what

the government is going to do? The government might amend the bill in some way.

I want to give you a couple of examples of what I've seen in times when bills used to travel. I remember back in the day, when the Conservatives were in government, they had a particular bill having to do with changes to the Assessment Act. In that particular bill, the government was pretty convinced it was going to do things in a way that they thought was best, but we in the opposition said no. At that time, it was the third party, New Democrats, a third-place party, who said, "No, we think that this bill should travel," because we had just gone through a very long debate in this province, through the Peterson years, the Rae years and now into the Harris years, about changing the assessment process.

We had finally landed on a market value system that took some years to develop. This government, in very quick haste, was trying to change it to what they ended up calling "actual value." Well, there were some problems in what they were doing, and guess what? The committee travelled. I was on that committee, and we went to places like Peterborough, Kingston, Thunder Bay and different parts around the province. Municipal councillors, ratepayers' associations and others came before the committee and said, "Okay, fine enough. If you're going to do this, here are some problems with your bill. If you don't make the changes, you're going to have real problems in trying to manage your way through with this bill."

Guess what happened, Speaker? The government actually amended the legislation, because the public had their chance to have their say. It turned out that—you know what?—sometimes governments get it wrong. Sometimes when people draft bills, especially when they're drafted in haste, there's a mistake that's made in the drafting. We did a number of amendments. We didn't get all our amendments; I'm not pretending for one second we got them all, but we got some fairly substantive amendments that actually fixed the bill.

Imagine what could happen in this particular case. In this particular bill, there's a very divided labour movement when it comes to what's being proposed in schedule 12 of this bill—right? I got the section right?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Schedule 2 of this bill.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Schedule 2 of this bill. So there are some very divided views as to what this particular legislation is going to do and what it means to workers. There are also some issues about constitutionality. There may be a constitutional challenge. There are a number of other issues and I've only got six minutes so I'm not going to get into all of that.

But my point is this: Imagine that in a democracy, that if the government were to say, "Yes, maybe we will allow this bill to go out into committee," which it is now at, but allow it to be able to go out into the province somewhat so that people can have their say, so that the workers who are affected by this bill on either side—because there are winners and losers in this bill, we understand that. But workers across this province could

organize, come before the committee and make their pitch to the committee about why they like this bill and what they like about it, or what they don't like about this bill and what they would like to see changed.

You never know. You may have a conversion on the way to Damascus, where all of a sudden you decide this democracy thing is not a bad idea. Listening to the public and sometimes doing what the public wants—God knows, it could work. You might all of a sudden find out that it is not a bad thing when democracy is alive and well, the public have their say, and the government has to react to the public. It would be an amazing thing.

1000

If we wonder why the public is showing up in provincial elections less and less so—in the last provincial election, we were in the low fifties, if I remember correctly. In some elections, I think we've almost been in the high forties. Why is that? Because over half of the population doesn't pay attention to what happens in this place; because they say, "Well, they only do what they want. They don't listen to me. Why should I care?"

I think that's a wrong attitude. I think you should care, because everything we do here is going to affect you in some way. For that reason, I think the government has to engage with the public and give the public an opportunity to have their say. It doesn't mean to say that a government—or a Legislature, members of the opposition included—has to do what the public says just because the public says it, but I think you have to have your say.

Imagine, members of the government party, if you were to take the same position in your constituency office that you're taking by way of time allocation, if somebody comes into your office and you say, "Nope, I don't want to hear you. Sorry, don't walk in the door. No, no, I'm not talking to you," or, "No, I'm not taking your phone call or responding to your email." How long do you think you would last as an individual member if you didn't allow people to walk into your constituency office, phone you, send you an email or send you something by way of Twitter or Facebook? You wouldn't last very long. You'd be hunted out of office.

Well, that's what you do when you don't allow the public to have their say when it comes to committee. It doesn't mean to say that each and every bill has to travel through the province to be heard. No, there are a number of bills that I think the parties can agree on where we don't have to have a long debate.

For example, there's an MNO bill that's coming before this House tomorrow, I believe. The Métis Nation of Ontario has been working for some time in order to get changes done in an act that would allow the Métis Nation of Ontario to have certain rights that they need in order to operate as an organization. They went to the government. They went to the opposition. A draft bill was done. They gave it to us. We had the government ensure that it was actually tabled, so that the bill that was drafted would be the same as the bill that was tabled—we've seen that switcheroo happen before—and we're going to pass the bill without spending a lot of time, either in debate or

in committee, because the stakeholders are satisfied and the government and opposition are satisfied.

So there are times when bills go through this House and it's not a thing where you have to send it out into committee. But clearly, when you have bills such as this, where there is a sizable opposition to what the government is doing, I think there's a responsibility on the part of the government to say, "We're going to hear you." It's just like when people go into Minister Gravelle's office, or my office in Timmins, or the member from Welland's in her riding. People have the right to come and see us. They have a right to be heard. It doesn't mean to say that we have to do what they tell us, but it means we have to hear them.

Why are we not doing that to the public when it comes to bills that are not supported by all the parties? We come here as representatives of the people. The process is that there are members who are elected on both sides of the House. The government side has a responsibility to govern, and we as an opposition have a responsibility to look at what the government is doing and try to amend it if necessary. The process of that is not the second reading debate or the third reading debate; it really is the committee.

That this government is not allowing this bill to go into committee and to travel somewhat, to give the public their opportunity to have their say, I say is a disservice to the people of Ontario, and I think it's a certain affront to what the people who framed the parliamentary system intended to have happen. Clearly, those who were there before us, in Westminster and other Parliaments around the world and Ontario, framed our standing orders so that the public has a chance to be heard. You do that at the committee level.

This government now has a time allocation motion that we're debating today that is going to take that bill out of committee tomorrow. It's going to come into the House and it's going to have very quick passage, and the public will have to live with the consequences of the decision of the government in that bill. I think that's wrong. I think the government can have its way at the end, but I think what they at least have is a duty and a responsibility to listen to the people of Ontario and give them an opportunity to be able to have their say. The fact that the government doesn't want to do that, I think, is a pox on their house.

Kathleen Wynne, the Premier, said she wanted to listen to people; she wanted to have conversations with people. This is not a conversation. This is her hanging up the phone and saying, "Don't call back, because I'm not listening."

I think that's wrong, and that's why we will vote against this time allocation motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. John Yakubski: I have said many times how I feel about time allocation in this House. I'm not going to dwell on that this morning, because time is limited, but we will be voting against this motion.

But I did want to make an announcement in the House this morning. One of the privileges that we have, as members—and I would never want to abuse the privilege—is this opportunity to announce to the world something very, very important, as a member of this Legislature.

Earlier this morning, I spoke to my wife—that's not an announcement that is news to the world. If it is, I know we're in big trouble.

Interjections.

Ms. Cindy Forster: What did she say, John?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Did she say, "What do you want? What are you calling about? Why are you calling here?"

Mr. John Yakubski: Yes. But she informed me—and then I received a text from my son-in-law Tommaso, or Tom, Colucci, that our daughter Emily had given birth this morning—

Applause.

Mr. John Yakubski: Yes—at 8:33 a.m. in Yellowknife, to a healthy baby boy. I was hoping I'd have more details. I don't have the weight, and I don't have a name at this point. I think they're still negotiating. Nevertheless, it's a wonderful Christmas present for our family.

Other than our family, I wanted you folks and all these people listening here this morning to be the first to know. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Gravelle has moved government notice of motion number 60, time allocation of Bill 109. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until after question period today.

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Orders of the day.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: No further business.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order, please.

There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1008 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Michael Coteau: It's a pleasure to be here this morning and to welcome some guests from Interactive Ontario. Interactive Ontario is planning its first lobby day here at Queen's Park. They represent over 300 digital media companies in Ontario.

Today we have with us Carly Beath. She's the person responsible for operations. We also have Hailey Wronski, Ruth Birman and Jeremy Friedberg.

In rooms 228 and 230, we will have Interactive Ontario setting up shop. Please come by to experience some pretty cool interactive media.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): To avoid conflict, we have in the Speaker's gallery today a former member: from the 36th, 37th and 38th Parliaments, for Don Valley East, Mr. David Caplan.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I would like to introduce, in our gallery this morning, Becky Coles, who is one of the producers at Newstalk 1010. Welcome, Becky.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: We have some guests from my riding of Pickering–Scarborough East here today: the family of page captain Hannah Dossa. Her mother's here, and her father, her sister, her grandparents and her great-aunt. Welcome to Queen's Park.

On behalf of my colleague the member from Ajax–Pickering, I'd like to introduce Frances Grove, Ken Hurst and Janet Swain, who are here with us today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to introduce Mary Lou Sukman from York–Simcoe, here today to bring attention to PKU day.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's my pleasure to welcome Bill Gibson, the area director for Unifor Kitchener-Waterloo. Welcome to Queen's Park, Bill.

Mr. Mike Colle: I've got a lot of guests here in support of Bill 141, the pregnancy and infant loss legislation.

I've got John Adams, the former city councillor; his son John Adams Jr.; Michelle Adams and Ryan Adams. John is the president of CanPKU.

I have David Huha, who is here. I also have, all the way from PEI, Evelyn Bell. All the way from Elliot Lake, I've got Shannon Bedard and her daughter Faith Bedard. I have Maria Di Gregorio, I have Edna Wright—all the people in support of Bill 141. Thank you for being here.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Please join me in welcoming Frances and Scott Goodfellow from the beautiful riding of Dufferin–Caledon. They're here to mark PKU day.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I'd like to introduce, from the great riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, my former executive assistant and now University of Windsor law student, Tanya Kuzman—T.K. is in the House.

Hon. Brad Duguid: We're joined today by the Automotive Industries Association, with President Jean-François Champagne, France Daviault and Jason Kerr, who are joining us in the audience up here today.

Hon. David Zimmer: Speaker, I am seeking unanimous consent for all members to wear a yellow tie or scarf in recognition of the member for Nipissing's, Vic Fedeli's, sartorial consistency.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I reluctantly stand to offer unanimous consent. Do we agree? I heard a no.

I'll oblige as long as I get co-operation during question period.

The member from Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Point of order, Speaker: I think it's only fair to inquire if the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs is prepared to provide all of the members with a yellow tie or a scarf.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not a point of order, so I'll continue with introductions.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you, Speaker. "Always fair" is always appreciated.

I would like to introduce a constituent of mine from Beaches–East York: Peter Miller, who's chair of Interactive Ontario. I look forward to meeting with you during the break.

Mr. Michael Harris: I know that the member from Eglinton–Lawrence welcomed the CanPKU delegation, but as well, here from Don Valley West is Patrick Gillette, representing his three-year-old son. They're here to protest the government's decision to ignore expert clinical evidence. I'm going to send it over with a page to the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm delighted to welcome Deana Ruston from London here to the Legislature today.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'm pleased to introduce and welcome Glenda Qua from the great riding of Halton.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I just wanted to welcome members of Unifor who are in the members' gallery today, here at Queen's Park for their lobby day.

Hon. Mario Sergio: I have the great pleasure of wishing our colleague and friend Ted McMeekin a happy birthday today.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I would like to welcome a Unifor member from London. Her name is Colleen Wake, and she is here today for the second time visiting Queen's Park. She's really excited to be here to talk to the Liberal government about their issues.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'm sorry; I forgot. She took the 4 a.m. bus today from London to be here in support of Bill 141: Deana Ruston. Welcome to Queen's Park, Deana.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further introductions?

Before I move on, I do want to ask members for their co-operation in introducing their guests. The least amount of preamble or post-amble is appreciated. The idea is to just simply take the five minutes to introduce our guests, and that's where it should stay. I'd appreciate it very much if you would co-operate with that.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Acting Premier. It has been eight years since the government created the LHINs, and for those eight years, the Auditor General has noted that the province has failed to determine or establish a way to judge their performance. Not surprisingly, she has said that it makes it pretty difficult to determine whether they have any value for money. However, we know the minister has promised change.

Mr. Speaker, is the government scrapping the LHINs, or, after eight years of creating them, have they finally figured out what they're doing?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: This gives me the opportunity to thank the Auditor General for her most recent report, her annual report, that does reference and speak to both our CCACs and LHINs. These recommendations point us in a direction that already builds on the strong accountability and performance measurements that we have in place in our health care system, including through our LHINs. They have a responsibility, as this Legislature knows, to integrate health care across the health care system.

We do know—and the Auditor General has spoken to this—that there is additional work to be done to further strengthen the accountability measures and make sure that we're measuring the appropriate outcomes as well so that we can continue to improve the quality of care through that important role that the LHINs do play.

1040

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Acting Premier. I appreciate the fact that it seems to be in every Liberal minister's speaking notes to say, "I thank the Auditor General." The AG report, if you've read the 773 pages, is an indictment of your government.

But I will continue. Whether you live in Moosonee, Milton or Muskoka, the people of Ontario deserve the highest quality of health care across our province. Sadly, the performance levels across Ontario and the 14 LHINs have been substandard. The AG reported that none of the 14 LHINs have ever met all of their targets in 15 areas of performance. But that wasn't news to the minister. LHIN performance targets are a problem year after year.

The minister's response to these problems, according to the AG, was to "take little action to hold the LHINs accountable ... when low performance continues."

If you really want to thank the AG, maybe for once in your time as minister you can actually listen to the Auditor General.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I know that the PCs, had they been in power today, would have gotten rid of the LHINs and fired the workers. We believe, on this side, the government, that it's important that health care decisions be taken at the local level, that they be taken in the community, not at Queen's Park, and that they be taken at a level where we have community representation on local boards making local decisions that apply to local—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's difficult to get control when the side that's answering is heckling, too.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And I'm right to say to the member from Leeds–Grenville: I don't need an

armchair quarterback. Let's just listen to the answer and listen to the question.

Please finish. You have a wrap-up.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm pleased to quote the AG. She says, "I am pleased to report that" over three quarters "of these actions have either been fully implemented or were in the process of being implemented. I want especially to note the exemplary performance of the Ministry of Education, Ontario Power Generation, ServiceOntario and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in implementing recommendations from our audits two years ago."

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Acting Premier: Based on their responses, I really wonder if they've even seen the AG report, because they have a different interpretation of the AG report compared to everyone in Ontario who's looked at it, and every single media report.

To the Acting Premier: Ontario has community care access centres. Thanks to the AG, we know that they spend 40 cents of every dollar on administrative costs and CEO salaries. We have two levels of health care bureaucracy that the average patient doesn't interact with. They interact with personal support workers, nurses and doctors. That's where funding should go—not an \$800-million cut to patient care, not physiotherapy cuts in long-term-care homes.

The AG report makes it very clear that this minister has ignored her previous recommendations. Mr. Speaker, will this government continue to ignore the Auditor General, will it be more spin or will they finally do the right thing and listen to the Auditor General?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, this was the second report this year by the Auditor General that referenced and dealt specifically with our CCACs. As I did in September with her first report, I embraced her recommendations and indicated the commitment of this government to implement every single one of them. We're working on these latest recommendations as well.

In the very near future, this government will be releasing a discussion paper which speaks specifically to her recommendations and to further changes on top of the 10 changes that I announced and that we're implementing, responding to the Gail Donner report earlier this year on home and community care. We implemented an action plan focusing on function.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville, come to order.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The discussion paper will speak to further needs and further changes that are required to improve the quality of care through home and community care.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before I move to the new question, the member from Leeds–Grenville: As soon as I said to come to order, you kept going. You're supposed to stop when I talk to you.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And the member from Dufferin–Caledon could also come to order.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, to the Acting Premier: Since I can't get an answer on the lack of action on the LHINs, let's talk about long-term care. Ontario's long-term-care homes provide for the province's most frail and vulnerable people. They must be held to the highest standard when it comes to residents' dignity, health and safety.

What have we learned from the Auditor General? We have learned that the backlog of complaints and critical incidents has more than doubled since 2013, during the time of our current Premier.

When will they give the residents of long-term-care homes and their families the peace of mind and security they deserve? This is your mess. This entire fiasco is on your watch. Will you own it? Will you respond to the AG and do something meaningful in regard to long-term care?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Associate Minister of Health.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question.

As I said yesterday, we accept the findings and recommendations of the Auditor General and we thank the Auditor General for her work.

I'm pleased to report that we are already implementing her recommendations. First, all outstanding inspections determined as high-risk by the Auditor General have now been completed. Especially important, we are well on our way to implementing her recommendations. Some of these initiatives have been under way for some time, long before the Auditor General's report came out. For example, we are working with our partners to ensure stronger measures on repeated non-compliance, expanding the number of offence provisions under the current legislation. All this is to say we accept—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Acting Premier or the minister responsible for long-term care: You may say you're accepting the Auditor General's recommendations, but you know who doesn't believe that? The Auditor General. She says in her report that you're not taking the advice, you're not realizing the situation that exists in Ontario.

This backlog isn't an issue the government can shrug off. Last year, the majority of critical incidents requiring inspections were a result of neglect or abuse. In just one year, that number has increased 90% on your watch. There were 1,750 of those incidents reported in 2014.

Our senior citizens—our frail, our vulnerable—deserve better.

Mr. Speaker, why isn't this government making a priority of this mess? Why is this government not investigating these serious complaints?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Since we're in the business of quoting the auditor's report, let me quote something here as well. While we acknowledge what we must do, I am pleased the Auditor General has acknowledged that "the ministry's new comprehensive inspection process was an improvement over its previous inspection program," and that the inspection process "is more extensive than those in other provinces."

It's a little rich, questions on inspections coming from the opposition, who never even inspected long-term-care homes when they were in power.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Acting Premier: According to the AG's report, four of the five regional offices had complaints or critical incidents that have been outstanding for more than a year—more than a year. Astonishingly, 65% of cases were closed without inspection and had insufficient information to show why an inspection was not required. And you're proud of that.

This government has ignored the complaints of families. They simply told them to go away, with no explanation as to why their complaint wasn't investigated. This is just callous.

Mr. Speaker, I've got a loved one in a long-term-care facility, and I would be absolutely livid if there was a serious incident and we complained and there was no investigation. Thank goodness that hasn't happened in my family, but it's happened in 65% of the complaints they have had in Ontario.

How can you stand by this? How can you spin your way out of this? This is wrong. Deal with it.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Associate minister.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Once again, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. As I said before—let me repeat this: All outstanding inspections—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. Let's keep the battle of the books away.

Carry on.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: As I was saying, all outstanding inspections determined as high-risk by the Auditor General have now been completed. The reason is that we do take our inspection process very seriously. We do take the recommendations of the Auditor General very seriously, and we are working to implement those recommendations. Work has already started.

Again, that's very rich coming from the opposition, a party that, when they were in power, for long periods of time completely forgot to do any inspections.

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HEALTH CARE FUNDING

M^{me} France G  linas: Ma question est pour la premi  re ministre par int  rim. The Ontario Auditor General says that seniors are waiting as long as 198 days before they get home care. My question is very simple: What happened to the Liberal commitment to five-day home care?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: As I mentioned before, we've had now three important, I would call seminal reports this year alone: Gail Donner at the beginning of the year; two reports now from the Auditor General. I take all of those reports equally as seriously.

The important aspect of these reports is that they provide very specific guidance and recommendations. I've embraced and supported and accepted all three of the reports and committed to implementing their recommendations. We are well on our way to implementing many of the recommendations expressed in these reports.

Earlier this year, I released an action plan focusing on improving the quality of care, including addressing the issues referenced by the member opposite. In the coming weeks, I will be issuing a further discussion paper, which will be making significant proposals for change to continue to improve.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France G  linas: Speaker, our Premier promised she was not going to cut health care, but so far, the track record is quite different. She has fired over 625 nurses this year alone; 150 health care workers in North Bay are receiving pink slips for Christmas; 84 jobs are being cut in the Belleville and Trenton hospitals; on Friday we learned that another 12 jobs are being lost at St. Joseph's hospital in Hamilton; and the list goes on.

Hospitals from Oshawa to Sarnia to Ottawa to Sault Ste. Marie are cutting front-line health care workers because of this government's funding freeze. But you know what, Speaker? Every one of these cuts hurts patient care.

What happened to the Liberals' promise not to cut health care?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: It's important to note that the NDP voted against our budget that had \$250 million of new money to invest in home and community care. It was the NDP government that—under their watch, as a result of their decisions, there were 3,000 fewer RNs employed in this province, as a result of measures taken by that party when they were in government.

We've taken the opposite approach. We're investing in home care, more than 800,000—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If it starts up, I'll go to the individual.

Carry on.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: There are now 24,000 more nurses employed in this province than there were when we came into office in 2003.

These are important investments. Our commitment to our nursing professionals is there. Our commitment to improving home and community care is as vital as it always has been.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

M^{me} France G  linas: Well, over the last few weeks, we've heard a lot about "transformation" in the health care sector. The Minister of Health uses that word all the time. So does Ed Clark, the Premier's privatization adviser and chief Hydro auctioneer.

But what we are really seeing are seniors waiting over 200 days for home care when the Liberals had a commitment to five days; we see nurses being fired when we had a commitment not to cut health care; and we see people who need care who can't gain access.

When I hear "transformation," I hear a weasel word. Are deeper cuts and even longer wait-lists—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not parliamentary. Withdraw, please.

M^{me} France G  linas: I withdraw, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Carry on.

M^{me} France G  linas: When I hear "transformation," I'm wondering, are deeper cuts and even longer wait-lists the sort of transformation the Liberals are planning for us?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, we're doing the opposite of what the member opposite is alleging. We're increasing our investments in home and community care. We're increasing the number of visits that are available to Ontarians. Last year alone, our nurses and personal support workers saw 35 million visits across this province. That was 1.3 million more visits than took place the year previous.

We're increasing our investments in home and community care this year by roughly \$250 million, so that we're spending almost \$5 billion. A tenth of the health care budget is being invested in home and community care, where it should be, Mr. Speaker, as it helps us move people out of hospitals into their homes, into their communities where they can be better cared for due to innovations and the supports available, and that's where they want to be.

JOB CREATION

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Acting Premier. The Auditor General said that she was concerned about how the Liberal government was handing out job creation dollars without any accountability or without even checking whether the money was needed in the first place.

The question is quite simple: When will the government be appointing the arm's-length boards and independent advisory committees for the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund and the Eastern Ontario Development Fund?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to thank the member for that question. It's a question that I look forward to addressing. But I think it's important, as well, to recognize when a member asks a question that's a legitimate question and when sometimes members get up in righteous indignation when they have no right to do so.

I want to compare your question to the question from the Leader of the Opposition yesterday, when he got up in righteous indignation. Here's a member who served in a federal government that supported 3,000 jobs, in partnering with Oakville, through those very same business supports; 8,000 jobs in Guelph through those very same business supports; 8,000 jobs in Cambridge and Woodstock. Where was the righteous indignation then?

But, Mr. Speaker, this takes the cake: I recall being in Barrie at the launch of the data centre, through a partnership with the federal government, and I have a photo of myself, Mayor Lehman and the Leader of the Opposition and his smiling face, cutting a ribbon with us and celebrating our business support programs.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Start the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Supplementary?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Speaker, I appreciate that the minister considers my question as legitimate; I would appreciate a legitimate answer to the question.

In 2012, MPPs passed legislation to ensure that the Eastern Ontario Development Fund and the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund would have independent boards, local advisory committees and annual reporting to create much-needed transparency in this House, but the government is refusing to put those sections into law. This is just another example of the government failing on the fundamentals of governance.

After last week's Auditor General's report, it's clear that the government isn't up to the job of managing job creation in this province and making sure that those funds work for Ontarians. I'll ask again: When will those independent boards be appointed in this House?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I appreciate the patience of the member opposite for giving me the opportunity to state something that I was looking forward to saying today.

The member realizes—in fact, we've worked with colleagues on his side of the House, as well—that it's really important that we strike a balance with our regional economic development funds to ensure that we're responding to those communities in a timely fashion. We've worked very closely with local municipalities, including his own area of Windsor.

Mr. Speaker, we have a process that we put in place that is highly accountable. For every dollar invested, there have to be jobs created. If they're not, those dollars are clawed back or not flowed in the first place. There's a very stringent process of consideration for these projects. They're not politically determined in any way. There's a process that comes through and, Mr. Speaker, I'd be

happy to talk a little bit with the member offline about this.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew will come to order.

Final supplementary?

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Mr. Taras Natyshak: Quite simply, in 2012, this House passed legislation to ensure that the Eastern Ontario Development Fund and the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund had independent boards who would make the choices to ensure that job creation dollars helped families in our communities, not just government friends.

Does the government think that job creation funds need less oversight, less independence, and less transparency?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Deputy House leader, second time.

Minister.

Hon. Brad Duguid: When I spent hours working with this member and talking with this member at estimates—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Kitchener–Waterloo, come to order.

Hon. Brad Duguid: —explaining the very stringent process we go to, for him to make those allegations after knowing that we have a very stringent, very accountable process is really not fair at all.

The fact of the matter is that I do not intervene and have not intervened in any recommendation that has come forward through the Eastern Ontario Development Fund or the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund. They work their way up through the communities. They're open funds, and we encourage corporations and companies to make access to them. Communities in southwestern Ontario and eastern Ontario are very pleased with the administration of these funds. I suggest that you listen to them as well.

HOME CARE

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Just when we thought it couldn't get any worse for home care patients in Ontario, the Auditor General tabled her report last week that revealed additional concerns about the severely troubled CCACs. What the opposition suspected, and we now know, is that the ministry has done little to address multiple issues that were identified five years ago.

Five years later, some Ontarians are receiving less care because of where they live. Five years later, supports still aren't available to the friends and families caring for home care clients. In fact, over 12 years, there has been no thorough evaluation of the current CCAC delivery model that ensured CCACs were providing consistent and quality care.

Mr. Speaker, where was the accountability, and why, over the past 12 years, did this government set up CCACs to fail?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question, again, and we acknowledge that there is much more work to be done. I have accepted all the recommendations of the Auditor General in her September report, and we're working on implementing those. We're working on implementing her recommendations that came out most recently in her annual report.

Importantly, Mr. Speaker, this work began in earnest earlier this year when we received Gail Donner's report on home and community care that pointed the way. We accepted each one of her recommendations, turning them into an action plan focusing on the quality of care and the timeliness of providing that care.

I think even the member opposite would agree that we need to continue that transition—because innovations allow us to do so, and the support that we're able to provide allows us to do so—provide as much of that care as we can in the community and in the home environment. That's what we're working to do, and we know that there's much more work to be done.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Back to the minister: The Auditor General's report revealed that the number of patients served by CCACs has only increased 20% while spending on home care services has almost doubled.

This government knows that whenever possible, the ideal place to provide care to seniors is in their own home—care that prevents expensive hospital visits and maintains their quality of life. This government has known for quite some time that our senior population will only continue to grow.

The CCACs investigated in this report never allocated the maximum number of home care hours they could because of budget constraints.

Why have the Liberals allowed CCAC bureaucracy to eat up 40% of home care funding year after year?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The member opposite is a health care professional, and he knows that in recent years, the patients that he has seen, or would see now, are coming to him with increased complexity of care. That's what we're seeing in our home care environment as well. Our ability, fortunately, to address those individuals' needs, and their families' and caregivers' needs, in their home and in their community has increased, but it also requires those important investments, to take advantage of innovations and deliver that quality of care.

That's why we continue, year after year, to the point where almost \$5 billion—10% of the health care budget—is invested in home and community care. That's going up by \$250 million this year, \$250 million next year and the year after that. We're making those changes as pointed out for us by the Auditor General and by Gail Donner's report. We're continuing to make those changes to advance the quality of care.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Acting Premier. Last night was a long and terrible night in

Thunder Bay. At the Thunder Bay jail, a correctional officer was taken hostage in a violent takeover of a whole floor of the jail. He was held hostage for four hours, and while his safe release was successfully negotiated and he is physically secure, the dangerous crisis situation went on through the night and took emergency correctional personnel to finally stop. We commend the correctional officers and crisis teams who spent the night trying to keep everyone safe and secure. We know that inmates are again secure as of this morning.

Our jails are plagued by fires, floods, broken cell door locks, understaffing, overcrowding—especially with individuals who haven't been sentenced—drug overdoses and assaults, riots and routine lockdowns. And now we have had a violent hostage situation. This government keeps corrections out of sight and out of mind. Will the minister now acknowledge there is a crisis in corrections? Will the minister take responsibility for the violent situation in Thunder Bay?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Attorney General.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I can confirm that a correctional officer was taken hostage last night. As a result of successful negotiations, the officer was released. Our thoughts, of course, are with the officer and his family, friends and colleagues at this time.

Our utmost priority throughout this situation was to bring about a peaceful resolution while ensuring the safety of our staff and the public. The incident was confined to the jail; there were no inmate escapes and no threats to the safety of the general public. The circumstances of this incident are under investigation by the police and the ministry.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Again my question is to the Acting Premier. This morning, correctional staff and parole officers across this province started voting on a contract that, if voted down, will put this province one step closer to a strike or a lockout in our jails. At the same time, it's being reported that managers will be receiving pay increases.

We know that while jails stay chronically overcrowded and clearly dangerous, the province has built or kept aside bed space for managers in the event of a strike or lockout. The last time there was a lockout, the government used managers from other ministries and departments to staff the jails.

In light of the hostage-taking and crisis in Thunder Bay, does the Acting Premier really want unqualified managers from various ministries like finance, the environment or the Treasury Board running our jails?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: The Deputy Premier, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: There is a ratification process under way. We will let the collective bargaining process work independently. We do believe that we have arrived at a deal that is both fair to workers and fair to the public.

I have to say that we very much value the work and dedication of our public servants. They do extraordinary

work. We rely on their advice, we rely on their professionalism, and we rely on their expertise to help make Ontario the very fine place that it is.

There is a ratification process under way. We will let the members decide, but I have to say, I think this is a good deal for everyone.

GROWTH PLANNING

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question is for the birthday boy, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Appropriate acknowledgement, please.

Interjection: Birthday man.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Withdrawn. Yes, the birthday man.

Climate change is an extraordinarily important issue to my constituents in Beaches–East York. While the Premier is representing our government in Paris at the United Nations climate change conference, here at home we have ongoing plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The minister, as part of his mandate, was directed by the Premier to lead the coordinated review of the growth plan and the greenbelt plan, along with the Niagara Escarpment Plan and the Oak Ridges moraine plan.

Working closely with the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, his goal is to improve the alignment of investments in transit with the planning and development decisions that will create more complete communities across the province. The review is also motivated by key commitments to protect prime agricultural lands in consultation with farmers.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday was a milestone—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I stand, you sit.

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

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Hon. Ted McMeekin: Thanks, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the member from Beaches–East York.

Several months ago, our government struck a panel led by the Honourable David Crombie to review the four pieces of legislation mentioned. The panel consisted of key agricultural, municipal, environmental and developmental sector expertise.

Yesterday was a milestone for the panel's work, as they presented their report. Grounded in extensive consultation, through 17 public meetings attended by over 3,500 people, and after receiving over 20,000 individual written submissions, they made 87 recommendations.

The significant participation and feedback is indicative of how much people want to get engaged in building strong, healthy communities. I look forward to having the opportunity to review all those recommendations with my ministry as we—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Supplementary?

Mr. Arthur Potts: I very much appreciate the minister's answer and the great work that he continues to do on

this file. The coordinated review has received considerable praise as a shining example of public consultation. The panel and the rest of his team who were involved in this important outreach should feel very proud of the diligent work that was done to date to ensure that Ontarians' views were heard.

We know that better-planned communities translate into many benefits, including significant savings on infrastructure costs at all levels of government. That means that more money can be spent on transit, health care and education. It also means less driving and less greenhouse gases, to help fight climate change.

Speaker, through you, will the minister tell this House how this report from the Honourable Mr. Crombie will be used?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Again, thank you to the questioner. The credit belongs entirely to the panel, a very esteemed group of people who worked hard together to advise us on how to best combat climate change; protect agricultural lands, water and natural resources; keep people and goods moving; and build healthy communities that will attract workers and jobs.

Our government remains committed to working with municipalities to grow the greenbelt. This report will also help us navigate this important policy area. The report will also aid our government in ensuring that the greater Golden Horseshoe, Canada's fastest-growing urban region and the province's economic engine, will be able to accommodate the additional 4.5 million people expected.

Again, I thank the panel, a very esteemed group, for their great work. I look forward to working with Mr. Crombie and others as we move forward.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is to the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

The associate minister stated in this House last week that she was building nursing home beds. She claimed she put new beds in Thunder Bay, Kitchener-Waterloo and Windsor. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The fact is that she didn't put 500 beds in Thunder Bay. The news release talks about home care but not nursing home beds. As for Waterloo-Wellington, they've actually seen a decrease in the rate of long-term-care beds per senior citizen. As for Windsor, the minister is rehashing a 2011 announcement. The truth is, 2,000 seniors remain without access to a bed. The associate minister needs to own up to her mistake and withdraw the erroneous statements.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I ask: Will she correct her statement, show accountability and immediately release the schedule of all nursing home bed developments in Ontario?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I thank the member opposite for his question.

I'm going to reiterate the fact that we continue to invest in long-term-care beds here in Ontario. That is

why we've added 10,000 beds and counting since we came to office and we have redeveloped 13,000 beds.

I'm going to give you some—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): When I sit, I'll wait for the person who tries to get one in.

Carry on.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I'd like to give a recent example. This is from the Village at University Gates in Waterloo. I was there at the opening on October 30, but it's been in operation for some time. That's 192 new beds. That's an example of the beds we are investing in.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward-Hastings, come to order, and the member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, come to order.

Supplementary.

Mr. Bill Walker: Back to the associate minister—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me.

I seem to have been challenged. As soon as I asked him to be quiet, he did it again. The second time for the member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek.

Supplementary?

Mr. Bill Walker: I reiterate: Where? With all due respect, this is pure humbug. You're not going to build any new long-term-care nursing home beds. Is the associate minister even aware that this government has not issued a single announcement on nursing home beds in four years?

This is why her second statement from last week is the one that really takes the cake: "But we are not resting on our laurels." We "have also added beds in Oshawa." That's just callous. The Oshawa-Whitby facility was built to replace the one that burned down in a fire in 2014 and houses the same residents displaced by that fire.

Mr. Speaker, this government has been failing our sick and frail seniors for 12 years. Through you to the associate minister, I ask: Why make erroneous statements? Why won't you just admit that you have no intention of building any new nursing home beds?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Let me just address the issue of humbug. I would like the member opposite to ask his own colleagues who were there at the opening of the Waterloo long-term-care residence if they thought it was humbug: colleagues such as Michael Harris, representing Kitchener-Conestoga, or Ted Arnott, representing Halton Hills. They were there representing their constituents. You should ask them if they think it's humbug.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward-Hastings, second time.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You'll get your first.

New question.

TRUCKING SAFETY

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question today is to the Minister of Transportation. Yesterday we learned that less than 8% of the trucks on our roads receive safety inspections each year, and of the trucks that do receive inspections, roughly 25% of them fail.

In 2008, the Auditor General revealed serious flaws in our commercial vehicle inspection system. Seven years later, it looks like little has changed. Why does the government knowingly risk the safety of Ontarians by allowing so many unsafe trucks onto our roads?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member from Niagara Falls for his question. I think one thing he would know—because I've said it many times here in the chamber and beyond the chamber—is that over the last 13 years, the province of Ontario has ranked first or second across all of North America for road and highway safety. That's first or second across all categories. But in particular, over the last number of years, the amount of large truck traffic on Ontario's highways has risen dramatically, and in that same period, the number of fatalities involving large trucks has dropped precipitously.

When we take into account all of these factors, road and highway safety is of paramount concern to this government. It's a crucial part of my mandate. We will continue to work with the industry and we will continue to work with all partners to make sure that we are delivering road and highway safety for the people of Ontario, as they expect and deserve.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you, Minister. I appreciate your answer. But as you know and everybody in this House knows, because we spoke about it, the roads last year in Ontario were unsafe to drive on. You know it and everybody else knows it.

Minister, there is a pattern here. This government cuts costs and then it cuts corners. In the past few months, we have learned about the serious flaws with Ontario's privatized truck drivers' examination centres. We have known for years that privatized winter road maintenance is a mess. Seven years after the AG's report, we are again seeing serious flaws with the commercial vehicle inspection system.

When will this government stop cutting corners and endangering Ontarians by restoring proper oversight on the safety of our highways? Our kids and our grandkids deserve no better.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I think the member opposite meant "no less." I'd be happy to help him with his questions in the future, I suppose.

To be really clear about this, Speaker, I know it might not fit with the opposition's narrative around these issues, but the results are clear. I couldn't be any more clear about this: For 13 years in a row, the roads and highways in this province have ranked first or second in North America in terms of road and highway safety. I said that earlier; I'll continue to say that.

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We have to remember, as well, that between 2002 and 2011—I said this earlier—we have seen the number of fatalities involving large trucks decline by 41%.

Each and every single year, the Ministry of Transportation's enforcement officers conduct more than 110,000 commercial inspections annually.

Working together, for all of these reasons, we continue to deliver the road and highway safety in this province that the people deserve.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Chris Ballard: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. The forestry sector is an important industry for our province, employing nearly 170,000 people and generating more than \$11 billion for Ontario's economy. Trade with the United States is significant to this sector, generating exports valued at close to \$5 billion and accounting for as much as 95% of Ontario's forestry and wood product manufacturing exports.

Recently, the nearly decade-long softwood lumber agreement between the US and Canada expired. Discussions about this agreement and any future softwood lumber trade agreements between the governments of Canada and the United States will have a significant effect on Ontario's forestry sector.

Speaker, can the minister tell us about the current status of the softwood lumber agreement?

Hon. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member from Newmarket–Aurora for this question.

The softwood lumber agreement is obviously very important to us here in our ministry, and to the forest products sector in Ontario. The agreement, first penned in 2006, expired in 2013. There have been two subsequent one-year extensions of that agreement. It is fully expired as of October of this year.

We now find ourselves in a situation contained in the original 2006 agreement that is referred to as a standstill period. What that means is that there is about one year of what would be considered to be free trade between Ontario as a forest products exporter and the United States, where they have agreed in the 2006 agreement not to import any duties or taxes on the exporting industry in Ontario. This is a period of time where we need to be vigilant, to be working towards the new agreement. We are reaching out to our federal partners, who are obviously the lead on the file, seeing what we can do to prepare ourselves for the end of the standstill.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Chris Ballard: Thank you, Minister, for the update on the current status of the process. It's important that this is a priority for you and the Ministry of Natural Resources, and I'm satisfied that it is.

It's also clear that this agreement is complex and complicated to negotiate. At the same time as negotiations move along, issues may develop in a rapid manner. This will require that Ontario be prepared to quickly respond to requests for information and proposals.

Can the minister tell us how his ministry is working with the industry, other levels of government and other stakeholders to ensure continued access to the important US market for our softwood lumber products?

Hon. Bill Mauro: Again, I want to thank the member from Newmarket–Aurora for the question.

We have spent a great deal of time in our ministry reaching out to industry on this particular file. There are three major softwood lumber exporters in the province of Ontario: Resolute, Eacom and Tembec. Of course, there are others in the industry who export into the market, but they are the three biggest players. Most of their product does go to the US.

We've also been in contact with Ontario's trade reps in Washington and, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, we have done outreach to our federal counterparts. We're looking to sit down as soon as we can with our new federal ministers who have their hands on this file. As I mentioned earlier, they are the lead, but we will do everything that we can to ensure that Ontario's interests are represented in federally led negotiations with our American partners on this.

We understand fully the importance of this industry to Ontario, and we understand very clearly the importance of this industry to northern Ontario specifically. We'll do everything that we can to represent their interests.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM PROGRAMME DE MÉDICAMENTS DE L'ONTARIO

Mrs. Gila Martow: To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care: We are joined in the gallery today by patients and their families suffering from a brain-threatening disease called PKU.

Comme le ministre le sait, la PCU est une maladie héréditaire métabolique trouvée dans environ un de chaque 12 000 nouveau-nés au Canada. Le seul traitement approuvé, Kuvan, a été approuvé en avril 2010, et ce gouvernement l'a classé en 2013.

Amazingly, five years later, not one single Ontario patient has gained access to Kuvan due to this government's highly restrictive criteria. En fait, les trois seuls qui ont appliqué pour le traitement ont été rejetés. Today we learned that one of the advocates has actually filed a complaint to the College of Physicians and Surgeons because of frustration with this government's mishandling of the file.

Let me say it again: Not one single patient has received a treatment that government officials have approved. Est-ce que cela vous semble juste?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. I think the member opposite knows that we took the politics out of funding drugs in this province. Our decisions on which drugs to fund are based on science and evidence.

In the case of Kuvan, in 2011, the national Common Drug Review issued a do-not-list recommendation for the drug. Twice the province reviewed Kuvan, both reviews resulting in a do-not-list recommendation. But despite

three negative recommendations, Ontario, since February 2013, has been funding, through our Exceptional Access Program, Kuvan on a case-by-case basis. The criteria for funding were established with input from the manufacturer and from clinicians who treat PKU.

In June of this year, the manufacturer, BioMarin, informed the ministry that they now intend to file a resubmission to the Common Drug Review. We look forward to seeing that submission and reviewing it for the fourth time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Again to the minister: I think the point here is that the criteria are too difficult. The government knows that two years ago, all of Ontario's specialists who treat PKU wrote to the government to express their concerns with the criteria. Ils ont même fourni des révisions suggérées pour aider à assurer que les patients reçoivent le traitement dont ils ont tellement besoin. Mais à ce jour, le conseil des experts et les preuves cliniques ont été ignorés.

Today we learned that those same specialists have again written to you to express their continued frustration at the lack of Kuvan access in Ontario.

Je vais avoir un page législatif livrer au ministre la preuve médicale qui soutient l'appel pour modifier les critères, les preuves que le département de santé a choisi d'ignorer.

We have asked before: Will this government commit today to revise the criteria so these patients can receive the treatment they desperately need?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I do want to acknowledge the advocates and patients who are here today. This is an incredibly challenging and life-threatening illness.

Saskatchewan is the only other Canadian jurisdiction to list Kuvan with precisely the same criteria as Ontario. BC chose not to list the drug. Quebec funds maternal PKU, which is the case in Ontario as well. This indication is also covered in Ontario, and Quebec considers other requests on a case-by-case basis.

Alberta was identified by advocates as funding. We found out that this was through a temporary disability program. Alberta no longer funds PKU. It's not funded in the UK. It's not funded in New Zealand.

We need to be consistent, take the politics out of this and make our decisions based on science and good evidence. Notwithstanding that, we have made this drug available on an exceptional-access basis to those individuals who truly do need it and where it has been proven to be beneficial.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Acting Premier. This morning, Londoners learned that 500 surgeries in our local hospitals will be cancelled, to be rescheduled at a later date. This means that 500 patients who have already been waiting in pain for up to two years will be forced to wait even longer.

One of my constituents, Brian Peck, was told in November 2014 that he needed a hip replacement, but it

may not be scheduled until the end of 2016. He is using a walker and has already fallen three times because of his hip. The surgeon says he will probably be in a wheelchair by the time he gets the surgery.

The hospitals say they've run out of money; the LHIN blames the hospitals for booking too many surgeries.

My question is: Who in this Liberal government is looking out for patients, for these 500 people in London who are now facing a health care crisis?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: This is obviously an extremely important issue. We have an expectation, both through our LHINs and the hospitals directly, that they continue to work together closely, not only within the fiscal framework provided to them but in a manner, importantly and critically, that maintains and enhances the quality of care that's provided for those who depend on that resource. So our expectation in this, as in all cases, is that patient care will not be impacted.

1130

I do need to point out that our funding to the London Health Sciences Centre has risen by 72% over the last decade, an increase of more than \$316 million. We have a commitment to make sure that that level of service that the individuals in London and the London area deserve is available and provided to them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member from London—Fanshawe.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Back to the Acting Premier: Wait times are already longer in London than in other parts of the province, and surgeries in our hospitals keep getting cancelled.

In March, I stood up in this House and I asked the minister to stop the cuts to elective surgeries that month. The minister refused. Now it's happening again. Some 500 patients in London will wait even longer for surgery because this Liberal government failed to do its job.

Will this Liberal government take responsibility and stop the latest cuts to surgeries, or will the Acting Premier make more excuses and force 500 patients to wait even longer? Which is it?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I do remember distinctly when the member opposite raised this about a year ago, or just under a year ago. In that case, it was her assumption that these were cuts or somehow unpredictable. In fact, they were part of regularly scheduled closures of the OR that occur in a number of hospitals—or is reduced in a number of hospitals—over the holiday season.

In this case, I will certainly investigate what the particulars of this allegation are, but I do maintain my commitment and responsibility to ensure that the quality of care provided through that hospital, as others, throughout the province is maintained, and I will be following up directly with the hospital as well as with the LHIN.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: My question is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Ontario has a rich and long mining heritage that has created wealth and

helped to build our province into what it is today. But every now and then, in communities across Ontario, there are former mine sites that need to be rehabilitated. I'm proud to be a member of a government that understands that cleaning up these sites helps to protect the environment as well as the health and well-being of all Ontarians.

Would the Minister of Northern Development and Mines share with this House how our government continues to ensure that our environment is protected and that abandoned mine sites are cleaned up?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: That's just a great question—a very timely question—from the member from Sudbury, obviously a great advocate for the mining industry, but a very strong advocate for the environment as well, and much appreciated.

The truth is, our government takes the health and safety of all Ontarians very, very seriously. That's why we're committed, through the Abandoned Mines Rehabilitation Program, to ensure that abandoned mines are indeed rehabilitated.

Since the beginning of the Abandoned Mines Rehabilitation Program, we've undertaken rehabilitation on 80 of the highest-priority abandoned mine sites located throughout the province. This work demonstrates our very strong commitment to a sustainable mining industry that works to ensure the protection of the environment and provides substantive and sustainable benefits to our residents and our communities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: I'm certainly pleased to hear the minister speak to the important work our government is doing to ensure abandoned mine sites located throughout Ontario are cleaned up to protect our natural environment.

The Abandoned Mines Rehabilitation Program is an integral part of Ontario's Mining Act, which is administered by the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. Since 2003, the government has invested in this program, and communities across Ontario are seeing the benefits.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: How is our government protecting the environment while ensuring the mining industry is properly prepared to fulfill their duty to rehabilitate their mining sites?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Again, I'm very grateful because, quite frankly, I don't think there's enough known about this incredibly important program.

Since 2003, our government has allocated over \$100 million to the Abandoned Mines Rehabilitation Program. It has supported the rehabilitation of mine sites in many communities; certainly the Kam Kotia site outside Timmins is a great example, and Bancroft, Sudbury and many other locations, as well.

We are very committed to the protection of the environment by ensuring that all mining projects also obtain necessary provincial environmental approvals and permits, and that the appropriate consultation with the public and, of course, aboriginal communities takes place.

That's incredibly important and we are very committed to that.

Under the Mining Act, mining companies must submit closure plans and rehabilitation plans to our ministry—again, something that I don't think is well-known by the public—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
New question.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you very much, and good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Deputy Premier.

Residents in northeastern Ontario didn't need the Auditor General to tell us that the LHIN has done a terrible job of delivering health care. But thanks to the auditor—she has confirmed what northerners are feeling.

The North East LHIN was tied for the worst in the province, meeting just four of the 15 targets. They are worst in alternate-level-of-care days, second-worst in wait times for CCAC in-home services, and they're one of only two LHINs not meeting the target of providing cancer care surgery within 84 days. The ineptness of the North East LHIN is nothing new; it's just sad to see that it still continues.

I ask the Deputy Premier, what is her plan to improve health care for northerners?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I know that it's the agenda of the member opposite and his party to get rid of the LHINs and fire the workers who are providing that integrated health care and coordinating health care at the local level. I know that it's the mandate and the aim of the party opposite to dissolve the LHIN boards that are comprised of local community members who, frankly, best know what the unique and specific health care needs of those communities are.

Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General has pointed to some important recommendations where we need to improve the functioning of the LHINs. We intend to take those recommendations very, very seriously. We will invest in those recommendations to ensure that the quality of care and the level of integration is what it needs to be. But I'm not going to go down the path that the member opposite wants to go down. We believe in the importance of local decision-making and we will continue to support that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Well, Speaker, they're the only party firing 315 health care workers in the city of North Bay.

Back to the Deputy Premier: In 2012, the North East LHIN met zero of their 15 performance targets. Any other organization would have made management changes immediately, but what did they do at the North East LHIN instead? They spent over \$750,000 to renovate their offices.

The auditor was clear: She said that the ministry does not consistently “hold LHINs accountable when they do not meet targets.” Well, no kidding.

Deputy, the buck stops with your government. I ask, what change does the government plan to make sure that the North East LHIN ensures that health care dollars are spent on patients, not on leather chairs and fancy drapes?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well, I know that the member opposite has an agenda to discredit the LHINs, to eventually result in their dissolution. We don’t subscribe to that view. We actually believe that it’s of paramount importance that we give local decision-makers through a community board—

Interjections: Care, not chairs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: —where we give decision-making responsibilities to—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Less chairs, more care.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

Mr. Paul Miller: Well, you’ve got four seconds.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, we have all kinds of time. It’s not just four seconds. It could be any time.

Finish, please.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: —to give that responsibility to local decision-makers.

We’ve increased the funding to the North East LHIN to over \$1.4 billion this year. Our funding for CCACs has increased by 50%, despite what the PCs would like the public to believe. We have a strong record of providing quality health care in the northern part of this province.

BIRTH OF MEMBER’S GRANDCHILD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke on a point of order.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I did speak to the House earlier today and said I had some big news. I wanted to confirm that. I just received some vital statistics on the arrival of our newest grandchild: 10 pounds, 12 ounces, and 22 inches long. He’s already bigger than Vic Fedeli.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That’s actually not a point of order, but it was a good one.

DEFERRED VOTES

MENTAL HEALTH STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT DES LOIS RELATIVES À LA SANTÉ MENTALE

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 122, An Act to amend the Mental Health Act and the Health Care Consent Act, 1996 / *Projet de loi 122, Loi visant à modifier la Loi sur la santé mentale et la Loi de 1996 sur le consentement aux soins de santé.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1141 to 1146.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All members, please take your seats.

On December 7, 2015, Mr. Hoskins moved third reading of Bill 122, An Act to amend the Mental Health Act and the Health Care Consent Act, 1996.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gélinas, France	Miller, Norm
Anderson, Granville	Gravelle, Michael	Miller, Paul
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gretzky, Lisa	Moridi, Reza
Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Michael	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Baker, Yvan	Hatfield, Percy	Natyshak, Taras
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoggarth, Ann	Nicholls, Rick
Ballard, Chris	Hoskins, Eric	Oraziotti, David
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hunter, Miltzie	Pettapiece, Randy
Bisson, Gilles	Jaczek, Helena	Potts, Arthur
Bradley, James J.	Jones, Sylvia	Qaadri, Shafiq
Brown, Patrick	Kiwala, Sophie	Rinaldi, Lou
Chan, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Chiarelli, Bob	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sattler, Peggy
Clark, Steve	Leal, Jeff	Scott, Laurie
Colle, Mike	MacCharles, Tracy	Sergio, Mario
Coteau, Michael	MacLaren, Jack	Smith, Todd
Crack, Grant	MacLeod, Lisa	Sousa, Charles
Damerla, Dipika	Malhi, Harinder	Takhar, Harinder S.
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Taylor, Monique
Delaney, Bob	Mantha, Michael	Thibeault, Glenn
Dhillon, Vic	Martins, Cristina	Vanthof, John
Dong, Han	Martow, Gila	Vernile, Daiene
Duguid, Brad	Matthews, Deborah	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	Mauro, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Fife, Catherine	McDonnell, Jim	Wong, Soo
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McGarry, Kathryn	Yakabuski, John
Forster, Cindy	McMahon, Eleanor	Yurek, Jeff
Fraser, John	McMeekin, Ted	Zimmer, David
French, Jennifer K.	Meilleur, Madeleine	
Gates, Wayne	Milczyn, Peter Z.	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 91; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred on government notice of motion number 60, time allocation of Bill 109.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1149 to 1150.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On December 8, 2015, Mr. Gravelle moved notice of motion number 60.

All those in favour of the motion, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMahon, Eleanor
Anderson, Granville	Fraser, John	McMeekin, Ted
Baker, Yvan	Gravelle, Michael	Meilleur, Madeleine
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoggarth, Ann	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Ballard, Chris	Hoskins, Eric	Moridi, Reza
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hunter, Mitzie	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Bradley, James J.	Jaczek, Helena	Oraziotti, David
Chan, Michael	Kiwala, Sophie	Potts, Arthur
Chiarelli, Bob	Kwinter, Monte	Qaadri, Shafiq
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Marie-France	Rinaldi, Lou
Coteau, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Sergio, Mario
Damerla, Dipika	Malhi, Harinder	Sousa, Charles
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Takhar, Harinder S.
Delaney, Bob	Martins, Cristina	Thibeault, Glenn
Dhillon, Vic	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Dong, Han	Mauro, Bill	Wong, Soo
Duguid, Brad	McGarry, Kathryn	Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hardeman, Ernie	Nicholls, Rick
Arnott, Ted	Harris, Michael	Pettapiece, Randy
Bailey, Robert	Hatfield, Percy	Sattler, Peggy
Bisson, Gilles	Jones, Sylvia	Scott, Laurie
Brown, Patrick	MacLaren, Jack	Smith, Todd
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Taylor, Monique
Fedeli, Victor	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
Fife, Catherine	Martow, Gila	Walker, Bill
Forster, Cindy	McDonnell, Jim	Wilson, Jim
French, Jennifer K.	Miller, Norm	Yakabuski, John
Gates, Wayne	Miller, Paul	Yurek, Jeff
Gélinas, France	Munro, Julia	
Gretzky, Lisa	Natyshak, Taras	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 54; the nays are 37.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The chief government whip on a point of order.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: On a point of order, I would not have done my job if I forgot to mention someone else's birthday today; that is, class of 2014, our newest colleague, Yvan Baker. Happy birthday, bonne fête, Yvan.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton–Lawrence on a point of order.

Mr. Mike Colle: Since there are people from all over Ontario here in support of Bill 141, the pregnancy and infant loss bill, I want to let them know that the bill passed through unanimous consent of all parties.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1154 to 1500.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Perth–Wellington on a point of order.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Yesterday I made reference to a sandwich in one of my speeches, and there was some confusion as to what that sandwich was. I'd like to correct the record: It was a peanut butter and tomato sandwich, sir.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member's record stands corrected.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise to recognize Amanda Meek, the executive director of Eye Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, who is in the gallery today. I want to thank her for the information she provided on a problem my constituents are facing, which I'll be speaking about shortly. I want to thank her for being here. Thank you, Amanda.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CHRISTMAS VOLUNTEERS

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: In Perth–Wellington, we have so many dedicated volunteers and generous residents who work hard to make Christmas a time everyone can celebrate. It's impossible to name them all in the time I have, but I want to recognize a few.

In Stratford, Ruth and Richard Kneider have organized the To Stratford with Love dinner for 27 years. Together with volunteers, they serve Christmas dinner to 700 people.

In St. Marys and Listowel, the Perth county OPP and the Salvation Army partner for the annual Stuff-a-Cruiser event. They collect toys and sports equipment for kids to open on Christmas morning.

Across our riding, including Arthur, Harriston, Drayton, Mount Forest and Palmerston, hampers full of food and gifts are distributed to families. Service clubs and food banks work together to bring cheer to all families.

In Mitchell, the Christmas Kettle Campaign supports the Mitchell and district food bank, and provides families with food and clothing. Christmas kettles can be found in communities across the province.

And, yesterday, Justin Bieber held a benefit show with all proceeds going to support the Stratford House of Blessing.

I would like to thank all of our community agencies and all those who give generously to make Christmas a time when all families can come together and celebrate. I encourage anyone who is interested in spreading some Christmas cheer to contact a charitable organization in

their community. May this generous spirit last all year long.

From my family to yours, merry Christmas.

FIRST RESPONDERS

Mr. Taras Natyshak: First responders in my riding of Essex always answer the call. While many of us are running away from danger, we ask them to run head-first into it. They keep our roads safe, they pull us from burning buildings, they stabilize us and provide us with first aid while speedily transporting us to hospitals—all in a day's work.

They also contribute greatly to our communities on their own time. They identify a need or a cause and move in to fill that need. Essex OPP Constable Joe Meloche is spearheading Santa's Cause for Kids. In partnership with Essex Fire and Rescue, they've been gathering toys in Essex with the help of local businesses for the last 13 years.

I would encourage everyone to help out Joe in this great cause to make sure that every kid in Essex has a few toys under the tree this year. Donations can be made at the Essex Party and Discount; Home Hardware stores in Essex, Harrow and McGregor; Ken Lapain and Sons trucking; the Dollar Tree; Red Apple; and Ken Knapp Ford in Essex also have drop boxes. Toys can also be dropped off at Essex fire stations number 1 and 2 in Gesto. I want to thank Joe and all of his colleagues and wish them all a merry Christmas.

While we have the opportunity to highlight what first responders do for us, let's imagine and let's see if we can help them. They've been asking, for quite some time, for recognition for post-traumatic stress disorder. There's a bill on the docket here—Bill 2—which would recognize the strain and the post-traumatic stress that they encounter every day, all in a day's work. We can wish them and grant them a wonderful Christmas gift by passing that bill, Bill 2, and ensuring that our first responders are treated fairly and given the resources that they need in the line of duty.

2015 WORLD JUNIOR A CHALLENGE

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It's indeed my honour to share some exciting news taking place in my riding next week. The town of Cobourg will co-host the 2015 World Junior A Challenge hockey tournament with the town of Whitby, with pre-tournament exhibition games held locally in Wellington and Quinte West.

The World Junior A Challenge is an annual international ice hockey tournament that showcases Junior A level players under 20 years old. The six teams featured in this year's tournament are from the US, Czech Republic, Russia, Switzerland and Canada, which has two squads: Canada East and Canada West.

This will mark the first time since the inception of the tournament in 2006 that it will be hosted in Ontario. This will provide an economic boost to local business and

tourism both in Durham and Northumberland region. It's great news for hockey enthusiasts across Ontario and it creates a wonderful opportunity to showcase our hockey towns to the international hockey community.

I'd like to thank World Junior A Challenge event chair and former MPP Jerry Ouellette and Junior Hockey League governors Mark Mercier of the Cobourg Cougars and Scott McCrory of the Whitby Fury for all their hard work.

The 2015 tournament will take place December 13 to 19, and I encourage all Ontarians to come out and cheer our Canadian players.

HARRY PRATT

Mr. Steve Clark: It's with a heavy heart that I rise on behalf of everyone in North Grenville to pay tribute to Harry Pratt. Harry had a heart so big, a soul so full of generosity and compassion, that they became the foundation on which so much of what's great in Kemptville was built. To those who knew him and loved him, he was Mr. Kemptville.

A devoted husband and father who built a successful career in real estate, Harry was taken from us far too early, on Sunday, after a short battle with pancreatic cancer. He fought that terrible disease long enough to see his beloved daughter married the day before. The ceremony was held at the Kemptville District Hospital, which always had such a special place in Harry's big heart. He was a true champion for that hospital, not only as a fundraiser, but in using his leadership to make it one of the finest small-town hospitals in Ontario.

Speaker, that's how it was with Harry. Many people raise funds to build things, but bricks and mortar weren't enough for Harry Pratt. He wanted to build organizations by inspiring those around him to think big and to be great. That's why the impact of Harry Pratt's life isn't measured by the dollars that he raised. His legacy is the lives he changed today and tomorrow because of the stronger, more resilient community he built.

We all owe it to Harry, his wonderful wife, Sheila, and their entire family, who shared so much of him with us, to keep building on the remarkable legacy he entrusted to us.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. John Vanthof: The residents of northeastern Ontario continue to question this government's actions regarding the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission and the services it provides to northerners.

As you may recall, this government cancelled our passenger train—our only passenger train—promising in return enhanced bus service. Yet it took a call to the Ontario Human Rights Commission to actually force this government to provide those enhanced buses.

Since then, it has embarked on a modernization transformation, so it has closed bus stations. Now it has

cancelled bus services, and its latest buzzword is “meaningful change.” As part of that meaningful change, it has locked out 200 workers for a month. Yet in this very House, the Minister of Labour said that we have the best mediators in the country. The workers have asked for mediation. The government is in full control of this situation. The ONTC is a commission under the government.

To the Minister of Northern Development and Mines and to the Premier: What the workers are wanting to know and what the people of northeastern Ontario want to know is, what exactly does “meaningful change” mean? It certainly doesn’t mean Merry Christmas.

ECULINKS ETOBICOKE

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I want to share with the House that I was delighted to visit the Royal York Road United Church last month for an informative networking breakfast and to help celebrate the 10th anniversary of EcuLinks Etobicoke, a local ecumenical group that focuses on social justice. EcuLinks Etobicoke is made up of representatives from 10 different churches in Etobicoke–Lakeshore, with approximately 4,000 parishioners.

1510

The outreach committees of these churches realized some time ago the need for local churches to co-operate, coordinate and inform each other of events and activities. As they developed, the participants realized they shared concerns about social issues facing our community and, subsequently, EcuLinks has often contacted local politicians from all levels of government to advise them on these concerns.

EcuLinks meets regularly and has hosted a number of political town halls. They’ve been very supportive of the province’s poverty reduction strategy. In my meetings with them, we’ve talked about, amongst other things, our Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy and best practices for housing and homelessness. With the recent situation in Syria, EcuLinks’ current efforts are being directed towards refugee resettlement in Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

I want to congratulate the 4,000 parishioners and the 10 churches that make up the EcuLinks network and wish them a happy 10th anniversary.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I rise today because of the impact the government’s health care cuts are having on my constituents. I’ve heard from many constituents who have had their surgeries scheduled but are now being told they have to wait many months into the new fiscal year because there is no money for their surgeries.

These are not numbers. These are people who are facing a terrible situation because of these delays: people like the senior whose cataract surgery has been postponed until four months after her driving retest; people like the adult with a lifelong developmental

disability who is waiting for cataract surgery to improve his vision and balance; people who are in constant pain waiting for hip surgery.

According to the local paper, there are 30 people waiting to have hip surgery at Woodstock hospital, with some already waiting for two years. The impact of cataract and hip surgery is life-changing. All these people should be receiving their surgeries as scheduled, but instead, for Christmas, they received the devastating news that they need to wait many months because the government has mismanaged the budget.

Helping these people and planning the health care system properly should be the government’s priority. Instead, they have wasted billions and are now cutting it from health care that people depend on.

I ask the government to stop making up for their mismanagement by cutting the services that people need. And for Christmas, give my constituents the news they deserve: that there will be no more devastating delays for these life-changing surgeries.

HUMBER NORTH CAMPUS

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I have some continuing good news from the great riding of Etobicoke North. I’ve spoken from this chair about the hospital expansion and about the eight stations of the LRT.

I’d now like to inform my colleagues and, through you, the people of Ontario of the \$75-million expansion in partnership with Infrastructure Ontario at Humber College, the north campus.

It’s an extraordinary new facility; I’ve had the privilege of touring parts of it. We’re talking about a new library, a gallery, a student showcase, a new School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, an international centre, an office for student success and engagement, the registrar’s office and administration, and enhanced student services, including peer tutoring and mentoring, test centres and career advisories.

This will house and offer space for approximately 2,200 students to study at any single time, and perhaps more, if they bundle up on a single chair, as students tend to do on occasion. It’s an extraordinary, I would say, architectural gift, along with the educational sphere, to the great riding of Etobicoke North.

It is one more sign of the extraordinary commitment that this government is making, under Premier Wynne’s leadership, to enhancing opportunity, education and prosperity in the province of Ontario. I kid you not, Speaker.

MY COMMUNITY IS UNITED

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I rise today to extend my sincerest thank you to all those who participated in the My Community is United: Standing Together with Our Neighbours event at the Islamic Information and Dawah Centre last Saturday in my riding of Davenport.

I would especially like to thank the organizers of this event, Joe Abbey-Colborne, director of Faith in the City, and Imam Shabir Ally, of the Islamic Information and Dawah Centre, for opening up his doors to the community.

The event was attended by hundreds of people, including individuals, faith leaders, organizations and elected officials from Davenport and across the GTA.

As we all know, in the past few weeks we have seen an increase in hate crimes targeting Muslim communities in Toronto and across our province. It was within this disturbing and unsettling context that I very proudly stood together with my colleagues, neighbours and fellow Ontarians at the Islamic Information and Dawah Centre in Davenport. Together, we stood in strong support of unity and inclusivity, as well as to reaffirm our commitment to working across all community and government levels to build a hate-free society.

As an elected official and as a Canadian, I condemn all forms of violence here at home, especially those targeting places of worship and members of the Muslim community. These highly disturbing acts of hatred and racism have no place in our province and go against the Canadian values of inclusivity and diversity.

Being welcoming, open and inclusive makes us who we are as Canadians, and makes this country and this province the greatest place in the world to live in.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, AUDITOR GENERAL

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to section 28 of the Auditor General Act, I have today laid upon the table the audited financial statements from the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario for the year ended March 31, 2015.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I also beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on intended appointments, dated December 8, 2015, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies.

Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Ms. Soo Wong: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 144, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact or amend certain other statutes / Projet de loi 144, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter ou à modifier d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Carried.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 26, 2015, the bill is ordered for third reading.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. James J. Bradley: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The deputy House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Deputy House leader.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move that notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot items number 15 and 16 be waived.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Bradley moves that notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice of ballot items number 15 and 16 be waived. Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank the Brockville health care coalition and the 1,280 people who signed this petition. It's a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Brockville General Hospital is facing major direct care cuts to departments all across the hospital, including the intensive care unit, operating room, complex care, palliative care, emergency, stress test clinic, day surgery, diagnostic imaging, medical/surgical, and switchboard, amounting to a loss of 16,000 hours of nursing and direct patient care on top of vital patient support services that are being cut or privatized;

"Whereas these cuts will lead to the loss of nursing and other front-line health care positions, making it even more difficult for patients to access timely, quality care in the community we call home; and

"Whereas Ontario's provincial government has cut hospital funding in real dollar terms for the last eight years in a row;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) Stop the proposed cuts to Brockville General Hospital and protect the beds, services, and standard of care.

"(2) Improve overall hospital funding in Ontario with a plan to increase funding at least to the average of other provinces."

I'm pleased to support the petition and send it to the table with my signature with page Lauren.

1520

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I want to thank the Hydro One Not for Sale coalition for the thousands of petitions that they've provided us to read in this Legislature on their behalf. The petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads:

"Whereas the provincial government is creating a privatization scheme that will lead to higher hydro rates, lower reliability, and hundreds of millions less for our schools, roads, and hospitals; and

"Whereas the privatization scheme will be particularly harmful to northern and First Nations communities; and

"Whereas the provincial government is creating this privatization scheme under a veil of secrecy that means Ontarians don't have a say on a change that will affect their lives dramatically; and

"Whereas it is not too late to cancel the scheme;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario immediately cancel its scheme to privatize Ontario's Hydro One."

I obviously agree wholeheartedly with this petition. I will sign my name to it and send it to the table via page Dayo.

GO TRANSIT

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Cambridge, Ontario, is a municipality of over 125,000 people, many of whom commute into the greater Toronto area daily;

"Whereas the current commuting options available for travel between the Waterloo region and the GTA are inefficient and time-consuming, as well as environmentally damaging;

"Whereas the residents of Cambridge and the Waterloo region believe that they would be well-served by commuter rail transit that connects the region to the Milton line, and that this infrastructure would have positive, tangible economic benefits to the province of Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Direct crown agency Metrolinx to commission a feasibility study into building a rail line that connects the city of Cambridge to the GO train station in Milton, and to complete this study in a timely manner and communicate the results to the municipal government of Cambridge."

I approve of and agree with the petition, affix my signature and give it to Prasanna to bring down to the table.

LANDFILL

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas many of the resources of this planet are finite and are necessary to sustain both life and quality of life for future generations;

"Whereas the disposal of resources in landfills creates environmental hazards which have significant human and financial costs;

"Whereas all levels of government are elected to guarantee their constituents' physical, financial, emotional and mental well-being;

"Whereas the health risks to the community and watershed increase in direct relationship to the proximity of any landfill site;

"Whereas the placement of a landfill in a limestone quarry has been shown to be detrimental;

"Whereas the placement of a landfill in the headwaters of multiple highly vulnerable aquifers is detrimental;

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, humbly petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To implement a moratorium in Oxford county, Ontario, on any future landfill construction or approval until such time as a full and comprehensive review of alternatives has been completed which would examine best practices in other jurisdictions around the world;

"That this review of alternatives would give particular emphasis to (a) practices which involve the total recycling or composting of all products currently destined for landfill sites in Ontario and (b) the production of goods which can be practically and efficiently recycled or reused so as to not require disposal."

I affix my signature as I agree with this petition.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have a petition gathered at the hospice of Windsor. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I agree with this petition. I will sign it and give it to Rachael to bring up to the front.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It's entitled Fluoridate All Ontario Drinking Water. I'm pleased to thank the Bristol Dental Clinic on Bristol Road West in Mississauga for having sent this along. It reads as follows:

"Whereas fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in virtually all water supplies, even the ocean; and

"Whereas scientific studies conducted during the past 70 years have consistently shown that the fluoridation of community water supplies is a safe and effective means of preventing dental decay, and is a public health measure endorsed by more than 90 national and international health organizations; and

"Whereas dental decay is the second-most frequent condition suffered by children, and is one of the leading causes of absences from school; and

"Whereas Health Canada has determined that the optimal concentration of fluoride in municipal drinking water for dental health is 0.7 mg/L, providing optimal dental health benefits, and well below the maximum acceptable concentrations; and

"Whereas the decision to add fluoride to municipal drinking water is a patchwork of individual choices across Ontario, with municipal councils often vulnerable to the influence of misinformation, and studies of questionable or no scientific merit;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the ministries of the government of Ontario adopt the number one recommendation made by the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health in a 2012 report on oral health in Ontario, and amend all applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario."

I'm pleased to sign and support this petition, and to send it down with page Taylor.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a petition that is being circulated by doctors and their patients, which basically

means everybody in this province. It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I am happy to affix my signature and to pass it on with page Megan.

FINANCEMENT DES SOINS DE SANTÉ

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'ai des pétitions qui parviennent de partout en Ontario. Ça dit :

« Alors que la croissance et le vieillissement de la population de l'Ontario pèsent de plus en plus sur le système de santé financé par l'État; et

« Alors que depuis le mois de février 2015, le gouvernement de l'Ontario a diminué de près de 7 % les dépenses de service des médecins de manière unilatérale, lesquelles couvrent tous les soins donnés aux patients par les professionnels de la santé; et

« Alors que les décisions que prend aujourd'hui l'Ontario auront un impact sur l'accès des patients à des soins de qualité dans les années à venir, ces coupes budgétaires menaceront l'accès aux soins de qualité axés sur le patient dont les Ontariens ont besoin et qu'ils attendent. »

Ils demandent à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario que « le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée revienne à la table des négociations avec les médecins de l'Ontario pour s'efforcer par l'entremise d'un arbitrage par médiation de trouver un accord équitable qui protège les soins de qualité axés sur le patient que les familles ontariennes méritent. »

J'appuie cette pétition et je la donne au page Aaran pour l'amener à la table des greffiers.

GO TRANSIT

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have another petition that is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the residents of the municipality of Clarington have been promised that the GO train would be extended to Courtice and Bowmanville;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario keep its promise to Clarington residents and commit to providing the necessary funding for Metrolinx to complete the extension of the GO train to Courtice and Bowmanville no later than 2018."

I agree with the petition, sign my name and give it to page Noam to bring down.

1530

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. John Yakabuski: I have a petition here. I had the opportunity to speak to Dr. Uttley in Pembroke last week and he has furnished me with a number of petitions.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I support this petition. I affix my name to it and send it down to the table with Hannah.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. John Vanthof: To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the provincial government has cancelled the Northlander passenger train which served the residents of northeastern Ontario; and

"Whereas the provincial government has closed bus stations and is cancelling bus routes despite promising enhanced bus services to replace the train; and

"Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission (ONTC) has been given a mandate that its motor coach division must be self-sustaining; and

"Whereas Metrolinx, the crown corporation that provides train and bus service in the GTA of Toronto is subsidized by more than \$100 million annually; and

"Whereas the subsidy to Metrolinx has increased annually for the last seven years;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To direct the Minister of Northern Development and Mines to reverse the decision to cancel bus routes immediately and to treat northerners equitably in decisions regarding public transportation."

I wholeheartedly agree and I will give this to page Noam.

LUNG HEALTH

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition that is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that has been signed by many residents across Ontario.

"Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children and youth living with asthma;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry's private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

"Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41," that it eventually will pass, and to seek royal assent.

I agree with the petition, sign my name and give it to page Alex to bring down.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT ACTION PLAN ACT (SUPPORTING SURVIVORS AND CHALLENGING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT), 2015 LOI DE 2015 SUR LE PLAN D'ACTION CONTRE LA VIOLENCE ET LE HARCÈLEMENT SEXUELS (EN SOUTIEN AUX SURVIVANTS ET EN OPPOSITION À LA VIOLENCE ET AU HARCÈLEMENT SEXUELS)

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 3, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 132, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related matters / Projet de loi 132, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne la violence sexuelle, le harcèlement sexuel, la violence familiale et des questions connexes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I am always proud to stand in this Legislature on behalf of my constituents in London–Fanshawe, and today I rise to speak to Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act, 2015.

Before speaking to the details of this bill, I would like to take a moment to recognize that this weekend, on December 6, was the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. As members of this Legislature know, December 6 is the anniversary of the 1989 École Polytechnique massacre, in which an armed student murdered 14 women and injured 10 others. I would like to read out the names of the women who were killed simply because of their sex: Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault, Annie Turcotte and Barbara Klucznik Widajewicz.

Speaker, the reason I wanted to take time to remember these women is because, disproportionately, sexual violence is directed towards women. As we all sadly know, over one third of women have experienced some sexual assault in their lifetime since the age of 16. Over 93% of reported—and that’s just reported; we all know there are many who also do not report—sexual assault victims are female, and an estimated 15% of female university students experience sexual assault.

The topic of sexual assault and harassment is one that affects too many young women in this province and across this country. But it would be a mistake to think that this is a topic that isn’t relevant. It’s still so relevant and it happens on a regular basis, every day, to women.

Men are also victims of sexual violence. Men who experience sexual violence may face anxiety, depression, fearfulness, post-traumatic stress disorder, have concerns or questions about sexual orientation, may feel like “less than a man,” or that they no longer have control over their own bodies.

Unfortunately, for all people, regardless of sex, there is a stigma around reporting and coming forward in the case of sexual violence. Many cases are not reported which could lead to severe mental health issues or post-traumatic stress disorder. This is too often the situation and, due to our current social norms and our justice system, victims feel uncomfortable or scared to speak out. This is simply wrong.

But I’d like to go back and address Bill 132 for the moment. As New Democrats, we condemn violence against women, and I’m always happy to support legislation that supports the social, political and economic

advancement of women. That’s why I’m glad to see this bill introduced, as it addresses many issues that victims of sexual violence and harassment face.

I’d like to talk to schedules 3 and 5 in this piece of legislation, which address sexual assault and harassment in post-secondary education institutions. These changes would amend the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005, to require all colleges, universities, and private career colleges to have stand-alone sexual violence policies developed with students’ input and reviewed at least once every three years.

That is a very important piece of this bill. To acknowledge that fact in post-secondary education, including the private career colleges, is actually a really good step, as well. It gives students a voice and gives students a place where they can report and have a policy, that they can have a standard in their university or college and know that this is something that won’t be tolerated.

Institutions are required to collect data to be submitted to the ministry, or the superintendent in private career colleges, on student use of sexual violence supports and services, reported incidents and complaints of sexual violence, efforts to raise student awareness of supports and services, and the implementation and effectiveness of sexual violence policies. I’m glad to hear that’s what they’ll be reporting on to the ministry or the superintendents.

1540

Speaker, as the former post-secondary education critic for the NDP, I can say that this is definitely—as I mentioned before—a step in the right direction. It’s probably a step that’s been long overdue in our society, but it’s good to see that it’s here.

In fact, lots of these amendments are changes that student unions and groups have been demanding for some time. I would go as far as to say that it has really been a lot of these student leaders who have led the way on this very important issue. We need to give credit where credit is due: to the students for pressuring this government to make appropriate changes to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and the Private Career Colleges Act.

A major group that has led the way on this issue is the Canadian Federation of Students. For those of you who are unaware of the Canadian Federation of Students’ “No Means No” campaign, let me take a few minutes to explain how beneficial and influential it has been across Ontario and Canada. The Canadian Federation of Students developed the No Means No campaign almost 20 years ago to raise awareness and to reduce the occurrence of sexual assault, acquaintance rape and dating violence.

The No Means No campaign offers various resources including research on incidents of sexual violence in Canada, buttons, stickers, posters and postcards. The campaign continues to be widely popular on campuses and in the greater community where thousands of materials are ordered every year and circulated across Canada.

In addition, the federation has also given permission to filmmakers and publishers to use campaign materials in their works.

No Means No has succeeded in changing the culture surrounding acquaintance rape and dating violence in Canada. Today, thanks in large part to the public education provided through the No Means No campaign, people have a greater understanding of their rights and responsibilities in sexual relationships; however, Speaker, date rape and date violence continue to occur on campuses in our communities, requiring the federation to continue promoting this campaign.

This campaign has been replicated or mirrored in many campuses across the United States, which has some very strong legislation on sexual violence on campuses. For example, the University of California Student Association, in co-operation with the United States Student Association, launched the UConsent campaign. UConsent is a campaign against sexual violence and assault which aims to promote a culture of consent through awareness, education and advocacy for improved resources at both the campus and state levels.

Students have been on the forefront of this issue because, unfortunately, sexual violence continues to be a major issue on campuses across this province. I'd like to commend the groups like the Canadian Federation of Students for their tireless work on this issue, and for ensuring that we, as MPPs, make the appropriate changes in the legislation to address sexual assault and harassment.

While I applaud the bill that the government has brought forward, schedules 3 and 5 only state that student input is to be considered and is not mandatory. I would like to see stronger language in this bill that ensures that students are listened to and consulted in the process of developing policies on sexual violence at post-secondary institutions. I think students would be a great resource and a strong voice for this particular bill that talks about legislation for students. We need to reach out to the people that it affects.

During the march that we had just on Sunday, it was symbolic. We walked in silence. We walked in silence because it showed that so many victims and survivors of sexual violence often feel they do not have a voice. So I am glad that this bill is in front of this House, so we can at least give a voice to victims on campuses through post-secondary education.

I look forward to further debate on this bill from my colleagues here in the NDP.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments? Seeing as how there are no questions and comments, further debate?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: It is my honour to rise and speak to Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act. Mr. Speaker, this—

Interjection.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: And I'm sharing my time, yes. I'll be sharing my time with the member from Cambridge and the member from Kitchener Centre.

This is an extremely important piece of legislation and I am proud our government is taking steps to prevent acts of sexual violence and harassment and increase support for survivors. Bill 132 sends a strong and positive message that makes it clear that sexual violence and harassment are unacceptable everywhere.

I was privileged to be able to participate over the weekend in a special vigil in honour of the women who died as a result of the École Polytechnique massacre that happened there a number of years ago. I want to tell you just how moving that ceremony was and, like the member opposite who spoke about it earlier, how much it touched all of us who were in that room to remember that moment of sheer terror that those women must have felt and what many of us felt just watching the news footage that day.

Here we are, years later, again making sure that this is being put on the table and that we are doing our best to protect women against sexual acts of violence. I am proud to be standing here today and speaking on this bill.

According to Statistics Canada, more than 7,600 Ontario residents reported being sexually assaulted last year. Those are just the cases that police were actually told about. What the numbers don't tell us is that sexual violence and harassment deeply impact survivors and the harm can last a lifetime.

Among the changes detailed in Bill 132 are new regulations for the workplace and post-secondary schools, two places where everyone should be able to feel confident in their safety and security. If passed, the act would require every college and university to create a sexual violence policy. That's something that will help give peace of mind to both students and their families. When our students head off to class, it is their right to feel safe and free from sexual violence. It is something that we, as parents, want to make sure of: that our children are heading to a place of security and safety when we send them off to school. It's our responsibility to do everything we can to protect them.

In my riding of Halton, the population is growing rapidly. That means thousands of young people who are heading off to college and university, my son included. It makes me proud to know that our government is taking action to ensure their safety. Also, as one of the fastest-growing regions in the province, new companies and offices are opening up in Halton all the time. It's extremely important that employers and employees are fully knowledgeable about their rights and responsibilities. Bill 132 would require workplaces to have enhanced sexual harassment prevention programs and ensure that employers follow up on complaints. This is key.

The amendments go even further by simplifying the compensation process for victims of sexual violence, because anyone who has lived through such an ordeal should be able to choose when to pursue a claim. They also make it easier for tenants to leave a residence on short notice if they or their children have been the target of domestic or sexual violence, because victims should be able to leave a horrible situation as quickly as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I want to applaud the government for making real change with Bill 132. These amendments go a long way toward protecting residents and preventing incidents before they happen. The message behind Bill 132 is clear: Sexual violence and harassment are unacceptable and will not be tolerated, because it's never okay.

1550

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member from Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I'm very pleased to join the discussion this afternoon on Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act.

Over the past few months, I've had the honour and the privilege of chairing the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment. This past year, this government has talked a great deal about this issue, and we have taken action. Every person in this province has the right to be free from the threat of sexual violence and harassment.

Our Premier and our minister responsible for women's issues have both addressed this issue head-on. We've had this very powerful ad campaign called It's Never Okay. Millions of people have viewed this online and on television. There has been increased funding for treatment centres. The Premier appointed a permanent round table to examine this issue and to seek out solutions. This Thursday, our select committee, after months of listening to experts, advocates and survivors, is going to be tabling our recommendations, and I'm very proud of that.

Now we have the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act. What can you expect to see in this legislation? We want to build safer workplaces and communities. We want to make campuses safer and more responsive. I have a 21-year-old daughter who is in her fourth year at the University of Waterloo, so my concern is not only as a legislator but also as a parent. We also want to see safer housing, and we want to assure a stronger civil claims process.

With regard to safer workplaces, I can tell you that we had a number of women who appeared before the select committee to tell us how they faced harassment in the workplace. There are a couple of young waitresses that come to mind. They said that when they were trying to close up at night, there was a boss who made very inappropriate advances toward them. They felt powerless to do anything, because they needed their jobs.

This proposed legislation states that sexual violence and harassment is unacceptable anywhere, including the workplace. The bill would enhance employer requirements regarding workplace harassment programs and add specific new employer duties to protect workers. It would require a duty to ensure that incidents and complaints are appropriately investigated.

I have previously shared in this Legislature—and I've talked about this for many years—what it was like for me as a young broadcast journalist back in the early 1980s, when I started in that industry. Every day, it seemed I had to listen to language that was rude and crude and in-

appropriate. I tell you that there was this edit suite where there was a poster of a nude woman on the back of the door. I brought this to the attention of a supervisor, telling him that I did not feel comfortable with this in the workplace, and that it made me very uncomfortable. His reaction was to laugh it off and to call me a prude. Sadly, back then, if you wanted to keep your job, you had to put up and shut up.

What's interesting is the number of women that I've heard from since who shared their own stories with me about workplace harassment. They said they thought that they were alone, but clearly these are not isolated incidents.

Our goal with this new legislation is to make certain that no one in this province ever feels uncomfortable and unsafe in the workplace. Everyone has the right to do their job free of harassment.

While sitting on the select committee, we heard from many advocates and experts about sexual violence and harassment on university and college campuses. The combination of young people away from home for the first time, with alcohol, drugs and a lack of understanding and respect for the concept of consent, can lead to tragic consequences.

Recently, I had a conversation with a counsellor at a Toronto-area university who told me that she had spent the day counselling a young woman who had been gang-raped by fellow students while at a party. The counsellor tried to assure her that it was not her fault. Oftentimes, victims are made to feel that they were somehow asking for it because of how they were dressed and how much they had to drink.

We need to find ways to protect young students on campuses and to deal with the people who are committing these criminal acts. We want to make campuses safer by requiring every publicly assisted university, college and private career college in Ontario to have a stand-alone sexual violence policy. They need to review their policy at least once every three years. The institutions should seek out student input in the policies that they develop. These institutions must report on the incidences of sexual violence as well as the effectiveness of their programs.

Bill 132 will also create safer housing conditions. It will allow a tenant to break a lease, if they and their children need to escape a violent situation, without facing a penalty.

Finally, the proposed amendments will remove the limitation period for all civil sexual assault claims. We heard oftentimes at our select committee that victims of sexual assault—sometimes it takes them years to come forward and report what happened to them. They have to come to terms with their experience. They need to know that they can do this and pursue legal action even if it is years down the road. They need to know that it's never too late to seek justice.

I'm so proud of a government that is taking the issue of sexual violence and harassment seriously and that is taking action to make us feel safe in our homes, our campuses, our workplaces and our communities.

I encourage my colleagues to support this important legislation, as I will too.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the member from Cambridge.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: As usual, I'm very pleased to be able to stand in the House and speak on behalf of my constituents in the wonderful riding of Cambridge, and North Dumfries and indeed Waterloo region, on this very important bill.

It's always a privilege to be able to add some comments to the debate and in particular to this one, which has garnered so much interest from around the House and really around the province on this issue. I'm very supportive of Bill 132 and the changes that this will make in our society to make us a much safer society overall, and free from sexual violence and harassment in the future.

I sat as a member of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment, as did several members in the House this afternoon. I know we were all privileged to be able to add to the important debate on this around the province. Interestingly, in our travels around different communities, we heard from different folks who may not have been able to come down here to Queen's Park. We had hundreds of submissions and phone calls to our committee really underscoring the important work that we were doing and the important conversation that we've come from.

I know that in her comments the member from London-Fanshawe was referencing the fact that some men, as well, experience sexual violence, either as boys or men. This is not just related to women; this really goes across all people of all sexes, races and different cultures. It's why I'm so proud to be able to contribute to the select committee and also add comments to the Sexual Violence Action Plan we've got before us.

As part of this government's Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment, Bill 132 seeks to strengthen provisions related to sexual violence and harassment in the workplace, on campuses, in housing and, indeed, throughout the civil claims process. Sexual violence and harassment are issues that all Ontarians face all too often. This bill represents a strong stand by this government against those injustices.

I have several children at home. I've got older children who are now working in the community. Certainly, this is an issue that has concerned me throughout their growing up and, now, as they are reaching adulthood. We've talked about these kinds of situations and how they can happen, and how they can move ahead and protect themselves. I've educated them as much as I can as a parent to try to protect them going forward. I think all of us in the chamber who are parents and have nieces and nephews and family members—this is indeed precisely why we're hearing that this is important work that we're doing. I hope to see all members in the House support Bill 132.

When it comes to campuses, we heard a lot about that on the select committee, and we certainly had a lot of

submissions from parents and advocates for safety for our kids on campuses as well as the students themselves. On campuses across Ontario, sexual assault and harassment actually stand in the way of securing a safe environment for our students to both learn and live in.

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Through amendments to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and the Private Career Colleges Act, Bill 132 proposes legislative requirements for each individual academic institution to create its own stand-alone sexual violence policy that's developed with student input and reviewed at least every three years. It's important to note that many campuses, whether it's a college or a university or other post-secondary education facility—it needs to be individualized, and we heard that loud and clear from many student populations who came to speak to this committee about it. Each different area has many different individualities in their own campuses, so it was very important to the students that they develop these policies in concert with the student bodies at their particular place of education.

Bill 132 also calls for a range of interim measures, supports and services to protect survivors by mitigating potential harm during sexual violence reporting, investigations and adjudications.

I'm proud of this government, which is committed to giving students and their parents the peace of mind of knowing that their provincial government and respective schools are taking a firm stand against sexual violence and harassment by effective sexual violence policies, along with providing information and help for those who need it.

Speaker, I have two children who have many friends in post-secondary education, and these are conversations that happen in my own household when their friends come to visit on holidays, between school semesters. And I know that this has been a big subject of consideration as they're starting off. Many of my 18-year-old's friends are in their freshman year, and they've all said that at the very beginning, during frosh week, they had education about the sexual violence and harassment policies and awareness, how to prevent it, and looking towards their own attitudes about this, to try to prevent it in future times. That is certainly a step forward.

My own daughter, Jenny Danahy, who's now 30, was head of college when she was at university, so she had special training to be able to deal with any issues that may have come her way as a trusted student representative, and what steps to take in the future if students came forward to tell her their stories.

On behalf of my government and the select committee, I'd really like to thank the post-secondary sector, which has conveyed their support for these amendments, for their dedication on this issue.

Turning to workplaces, Bill 132 also sends a strong message that sexual violence and harassment in the workplace is never acceptable. The bill amends the Occupational Health and Safety Act to include a definition of workplace sexual harassment, enhances re-

quirements regarding workplace harassment programs, specifies new employer duties to protect workers from harassment in the workplace, and includes the duty to ensure that incidents and complaints are appropriately investigated.

Certainly, one thing I've heard loud and clear, as a former nurse, is that health care workers are particularly vulnerable to acts of sexual violence and harassment due to the nature of their workplace and the environment, and the types of patients they're looking after in hospital settings and clinic settings, but particularly when they're caring for patients at home. They are a little bit more vulnerable because it's often just the worker and the patient in the home. So these workers need special protection and special education to recognize situations that might be unfolding, to know what to do to prevent these in the future, and also to report them and get some assistance if these things happen.

I also believe that the bill will go a long way to creating safer workplaces across Ontario, and a more equitable and productive society.

Bill 132 also seeks to protect Ontarians in their homes by making it easier for tenants as well as dependants living with them to break their lease earlier than the law currently allows, should they experience sexual or domestic violence.

I want to thank the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, who had done some work in the months prior to this legislative session, for work on this particular bill. The safety of Ontarians is of paramount importance, and this amendment to the Residential Tenancies Act will help those victims to leave earlier.

Finally, I heard loud and clear from many people who appeared before us on the select committee who really provided a lot of support for our recent changes to the health and physical education act. I want to thank the Minister of Education and her team for bringing this very important work forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments? Questions and comments? Being none, further debate?

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure to join the debate on Bill 132 this afternoon. I do want to take a moment to thank the select committee for the work they did. I know this isn't their bill, but I know that they were doing a tremendous amount of work over the last several months all around the province of Ontario.

I had the opportunity to join them in Ottawa last winter—it might have been in February—for a day of hearings. They were very, very helpful to me. I had a chance to understand in a more complete way the work that the committee has been doing. I want to thank all of the members, but I particularly want to thank my colleague from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock for the work that she did to have that committee established in the first place. I know they've done a tremendous amount of work, and my understanding is that there is going to be a report released quite soon—

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Tomorrow—a report from that committee, which I think will be illustrative to all of us and informative for all of us about what our next steps might be.

But this bill itself is a positive step, there's no question about it. I applaud the government for taking this action on Bill 132, because, as we've heard so many times, sexual harassment and sexual violence are never okay. Is that the ad campaign: It's Never Okay?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Yes, it is, and the action plan.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, that's appropriate, because it is never okay.

If you've been around long enough, you actually grew up in a time when there was an assumption, and somewhat of an acceptance, that it was okay, and it was just the way life was. If you're old enough, you would have seen that take place, and probably not even made much of a to-do about it because it was so prevalent. Unfortunately, that's what happens when things become normalized in society.

Fortunately, attitudes change, and attitudes have changed over the years, to where it is simply accepted that it is not acceptable: It is never okay. However, it still exists. If it didn't exist, we wouldn't have to bring forth this legislation.

Earlier today in Yellowknife—and I still don't have a name for our latest grandson—

Mr. Steve Clark: Steve's a good name.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I don't know about Steve. But I do know one thing: Apparently Steve Clark is right.

But wouldn't it be something if a boy born today, December 8, 2015, was born into a world where we didn't have to deal with the awfulness of sexual harassment and sexual violence? Without being too negative, alas, I don't think that's the case. We will have to be ever vigilant in this issue.

It is not something where I think you can pass a law and everything will be all right. A law is something that is passed on paper and it gives authorities the right to enforce that law. But what really changes the world is when people say, "Enough is enough. This is wrong, and I, myself, will have no part of it." Do you understand that? "I, myself, will have no part of it." If everybody was to make that commitment of "I myself will I have no part of it," that's how real change takes place, whether you're on the side of where you would be a potential perpetrator of these unseemly acts or a victim. It's important that victims are empowered as well. When they say, "I myself will have no part of this," if they feel they are being victimized, they take action as well.

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Everybody who is my age and older, and even younger, probably knows somebody—if they're not absolutely certain, they have a pretty strong suspicion—who has been involved in an abusive relationship, one that they feel absolutely trapped in, for various reasons. What matters is how they feel about it themselves, not because somebody says, "If you can get out of this, we

can help you.” They have to feel that they have all of those supports and they feel empowered enough to make that step.

We’ve all known people who have made that step, and good for them. But as attitudes change, it makes it easier and easier to make that step. In the days of my parents, if someone was in an abusive relationship—I want to be clear—if a woman was in an abusive relationship, it was almost impossible for them to escape it. It was almost impossible. The attitudes towards women who were divorced, widowed or anything were so very, very different than they are today, which made it impossible, sometimes, for them to get out of that kind of relationship. So we, as a society, have come an awful long way, but there’s a long way to go. There’s a long way to go before we can comfortably and categorically say that every person is respected for who they are, not treated any differently because of their gender, and that any relationship is one that is founded on absolute mutual respect and that no one will take advantage of one another in that relationship.

This bill has a lot of things in it that help, because we have to be able to allow people to escape those. I believe that the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services may even have had a private member’s bill at one time, before he was a cabinet minister, that had something to do with allowing someone to break a lease if they were in an abusive relationship, to get out of there because escape was necessary. That was one of the tools we could allow someone to use to get out of their relationship: They could break a lease. They would be treated differently under the Residential Tenancies Act or something like that. I don’t remember exactly the details, but I think it was the minister who did that, and congrats to him. Now we’re actually, if my understanding is correct, entrenching that in this bill. I see the minister across the way nodding that I’m actually right.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: You are right.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I don’t hear that very often from the other side. Surely to God, it must be close to Christmas.

That is something that is critical: that we support people who are in those relationships so that we can give them the opportunity to get out of a bad life and start a new life.

One of the most important things, I think, in ridding our world of this awful, awful thing that exists is the attitudes of men themselves and how big a role they can play in ending sexual violence and harassment. I think that if it’s only laws and it’s only empowering women, it will accomplish some things. But I think the crux of the matter is that it also falls on the attitudes of men themselves. They have to understand that whatever was the medieval way is not the way today. We live in a world where our partners are our equals. Whether we’re in a relationship or not, women and men are equal, and men have to accept that when they’re in a relationship you can’t use that attitude of lording over one or anything like that.

Because of attitudes that were wrong, we had a terrible, terrible thing happen in my riding this fall. On September 22, three women were murdered. Anastasia Kuzyk, Nathalie Warmerdam and Carol Culleton: three women murdered by the same man—allegedly. I understand; this has not gone to court. But I think the case is fairly compelling.

Three women, and the same man was in a relationship of some kind with each one of these women. He had gone to jail for abusing at least one of these women, though. The charges that actually stayed and had him incarcerated were based on him abusing one of these women.

Because I think our system has weaknesses in it—that’s not to do with this bill, but that has to do with other parts of our statutes—we didn’t do a very good job of ensuring that those women were safe once he had been released from custody. As a result, as I said, on September 22—basically the beginning of the fall season, the day of the International Plowing Match up in Finch—these three women paid with their lives.

I don’t want to spend all of the time talking about my own private member’s bill, but I think I would be remiss if I didn’t feel strongly enough about that bill to raise it as we’re having this debate today. That bill, I believe, if passed into law—it did receive unanimous support in this House on second reading, and I thank all the members of all the parties in this House.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I say that to my friend from Windsor–Tecumseh and all of his colleagues in the third party caucus: Thank you very much for standing with me that Thursday afternoon and saying that this bill won’t solve all the problems, but it will help. If we’re all doing something to help, we may eventually get there. We may get to a point where there will be a child born, maybe not my grandson today, but there will be a child born someday who will be born into a world where the issues of sexual violence and sexual harassment are non-existent. That would be a wonderful day for that to happen, sir. But back to the bill.

My bill would have compelled—sorry—would not have allowed someone to be released from custody if they had not signed their release orders and accepted the terms of such. If someone was released from custody, they would basically at least have had to agree to the terms of the release, which usually includes an acceptance of their own guilt for the crimes for which they were incarcerated. They would basically be saying, “Yes, I was wrong.” Is it allocation or something? I’m not a lawyer, but I think they allocute to the offences.

It would also have allowed the parole board or parole committee to compel that person to be subject to electronic monitoring if they believed the victim was at risk. As I say, it wouldn’t solve all of the problems, but it would certainly have helped in that situation or any situation like it. What we’re doing here, Speaker, is trying to prevent a repeat of what happened on September 22.

1620

That's part of the situation. The other thing that we talked about and need to talk about is the number of parole officers and the number of parole cases that a parole officer deals with, and the way that they're prioritized as well, so that we ensure that we have enough parole officers to cover a vast area like Renfrew county. For any of you people who have not been there, it's huge. My riding is four times the size of Prince Edward Island. So you need to be able to have the personnel to ensure that when people are released, there's a follow-up in keeping track of them if you feel that there are some concerns.

If a parole officer is meeting with people on a regular basis, a well-trained parole officer can look someone in the eye, sit down and talk to them, and they'll get a pretty good feeling as to how that person is adjusting to having been released; and also whether there's any of that anger or that malice still churning within that person, or if you feel that they're adjusting well and they're accepting that they've done some things here that are really wrong but they are really working and committed to making themselves a better person and beginning a new life as well. But if you're not seeing that person on a regular basis, you can fall victim to a snow job, or you're just not seeing enough of them to be able to be perceptive enough to see what is really going on. If you're seeing enough of them, you'll be able to tell whether you're getting treated to a story or whether or not that person is clearly moving very, very positively in the right direction.

We also have to make sure they prioritize those cases so that we're not spending a lot of time on someone who is very low to zero risk and so that we're spending more time on those cases where we have deemed them to be a much higher risk to reoffend.

It's not an equal thing. When somebody is released, we shouldn't say, "Everybody is going to get to see a parole officer once every week," or once every 10 days or whatever it is. We should be able to say, "We've got to see this person a whole lot more often," or "We've got to see this person less." Good people can make those judgments so that we're attaching the resources where they're needed most.

I want to wind up, in the little bit of time that I have left, by saying that it's not all that often that we—there are gaps in this bill. There are some things that can be improved. We've had the chance to speak about it not only in caucus but with my colleague from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock and the critic for women's issues in our caucus, and she has certainly laid out some things that I think can be improved upon. I hope the minister is listening. I know she's listening, but I hope she's "listening."

There's a distinction. Sometimes you can hear but you're not—I don't mean this personally, but sometimes people are hearing but they're not listening. I hope the minister is listening so that when this goes to committee—and I know it's scheduled to go to committee for four days through the intersession—

Ms. Laurie Scott: In the winter.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Pardon me? In the wintertime, yes. Through the intersession, in the wintertime. It's going to have four days in committee, perhaps some travel.

Ms. Laurie Scott: We're asking for travel.

Mr. John Yakabuski: We're looking for travel. I think that's a good thing. Minister, I think you would recommend that too. I suggest that you come to Renfrew county with the committee and hear what people have to say up in beautiful Renfrew county, the centre of the universe. There would be no reason not to come there.

When you have that committee, I hope that the committee is listening as well to the people about how we can make this bill even stronger—even stronger—so that when it comes back to this House after we return in late February next year we'll have the opportunity to bring this back on third reading and make this bill the strongest that it can possibly be. By getting this legislation right, we will make a whole lot of people a whole lot more comfortable that this Parliament—this government and this Parliament—has worked co-operatively in a very positive way to do what we can to end the scourge of violence against women and sexual harassment. If we accomplish that, we'll have done something very, very positive. I hope that at the end of the day that's exactly what we do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments? Being none, further debate?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: As always, it is an honour to rise in this place, and particularly on this bill. I want to thank all of my colleagues who I have listened to throughout the debate this afternoon. I want to especially thank the colleagues on all sides of the House who I had the real honour of sitting with on the select committee.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You're going to be sharing your time, eh?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you, my good friend. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague the member from Windsor West. Thank you, Yak.

It was something that I had not and have not experienced in this House as a member; I learned so much. I learned not only about the issue at hand; I learned about the ability for us as legislators to really put our efforts forward and to work together towards a common goal that we saw as of paramount importance in this place and to the people we serve.

I learned, through the process of the select committee and the resources that were given to that committee—the ability to travel that committee and to listen to testimony from survivors and from those who work on the front lines—that that methodology and that process is one which we should utilize as much as possible, because it ultimately adds to our knowledge base and it adds to the effectiveness of any of the bills we put forward or any of the legislative initiatives we put forward in this place. I commend the government for doing that: carte blanche, putting the resources forward and giving us the ability to get out there into the communities, to listen to stakeholders.

What we heard was frankly very, very difficult: to know the level of pain that exists out there, that people have been affected by sexual abuse, sexual assault and violence and harassment. To hear those stories was, I would say, life-altering for me in terms of my perspective and my role. It's one of the reasons why I was so proud to join that select committee, not knowing what I would add other than being a voice and listening; not knowing what I could add from learned experience, but also solely knowing that as a man I had a role to play. As a father of a daughter, I had a role to play; as the son and the brother of two wonderful women—my sister and my mom—I had a role to play, and all men had a role to play. I am honoured to have sat on that committee with my colleagues.

What particularly struck me was some of the testimony that we heard out of the north. We all know the challenges that our northern constituencies and our northern neighbours have faced, whether it be through economic development or just simply the remote nature of northern Ontario. It's vast, it's difficult to access and in some instances, as we heard through the committee, services—particularly or specifically through sexual violence and sexual assault resources—were not there and don't exist. Those incidents go untreated, unaddressed, and people suffer, ultimately.

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We heard testimony from survivors of the residential school system. We heard from survivors of those who would call themselves religious figures who singularly—one person, I can recall, was the perpetrator of over 500 individual cases of sexual assault on young boys and young girls in rural, remote and native communities. That creates a generational pain that cannot be healed without a massive amount of resources and support to those communities. It creates a generational wound that reverberates through those communities and causes them to not be able to meet their individual potentials. It's one that really highlighted the nature of the residential school system—how that affected those young children and how the effects still reverberate today. So I just wanted to get that on the record.

We certainly applaud and appreciate and support the initiatives by the government through Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act. It's one that, unfortunately, as we heard, was born out of necessity. Violence and harassment in all measures of society continue to persist. It's one that we are charged with addressing and one where I think this bill does some good work towards supporting victims and survivors and giving resources—we hope—to those who are on the front lines of supporting victims.

It has several schedules. I believe it has six schedules. Given my background in labour, I just want to focus on schedule 4, which addresses the Occupational Health and Safety Act; specifically, that “workplace harassment” includes now “workplace sexual harassment”—the definition of workplace sexual harassment. So this is a good first step. It codifies the effects of the sexual harassment

in our workplaces that, again, unfortunately continues to persist. The “procedures for workers to report incidents of workplace harassment to a person other than the employer or supervisor, if the employer or supervisor is the alleged harasser”—so there's an outlet there. It codifies how information “about an incident or complaint of workplace harassment, including identifying information about any individuals involved”—that's good. It codifies how the worker and the alleged harasser will be informed of the results of any investigation or any corrective action.

The duties of the employer with respect to protecting workers from sexual harassment are to investigate and address sexual harassment incidences and complaints and to inform the parties in writing of the results of the investigation and corrective actions, and to review the workplace harassment programs annually.

Also, occupational health and safety inspectors will now be able to order an employer to retain an impartial third party at the employer's expense to conduct an investigation into an alleged incident of workplace harassment. However, it is unclear as to the circumstances under which that may occur.

Schedule 4 deals with our workplaces. There are some areas in which it can be improved. I quickly want to touch on them.

Schedule 4 does not include a blanket obligation for employers to protect workers from workplace sexual harassment. It should, frankly. Let's take our current Occupational Health and Safety Act and apply it to the areas of sexual harassment and violence. Through our current Occupational Health and Safety Act, the mandate is universal precautions. We attempt and the act attempts to apply universal precautions to workers when they're in the workplace. We do absolutely everything we can. We know we can do more, but as the green book states, we apply those universal precautions. We have to look at sexual assault and sexual violence and harassment in the same light, as if it is a potential workplace injury that can be incurred—an assault that could be incurred while at work. If we are to do that and if we were to do that, we could protect those workers like Lori Dupont from Windsor and like Theresa Vince from Chatham, those in our areas who were victims of intimate partner sexual violence and assault and ultimately murder. We can do that and we must do that, and this bill has the ability, when it does get to committee, able to address the provisions within the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Here's a big one, Speaker—I'll end on this, because I'm almost at my 10-minute timeline: Under schedule 4, the bill does not give workers the right to refuse work if it exposes them to sexual harassment. Again, another basic fundamental tenet and principle built into our Occupational Health and Safety Act: the right to know, the right to participate and the right to refuse. We all know, when we learn in our various workplace health and safety training courses, that the right to refuse is fundamental—the ability and the right to say, “No, I believe that that place or that work area will harm me and

I refuse to go in there.” That principle, I believe—and I hope the minister gives it due regard—should be built into this bill, because God forbid if someone has the knowledge that if they walk into work, they have a high likelihood of being assaulted or violated, and they feel as though they can’t refuse that. It would be an absolute shame to not extend that provision of the Occupational Health and Safety Act to people who need it.

Speaker, again, I commend the government. It’s been an honour. I look forward to supporting this bill and I look forward to it receiving its due attention.

Applause.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you to my colleague. I appreciate it.

Thank you. I’m done.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Hon. Liz Sandals: No, he was sharing time.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): My apologies—wrong direction here.

The member for Windsor West.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It’s always an honour to rise on behalf of my constituents of Windsor West to speak to any bill or any issue that comes before this House. I’m going to start by building on what the member from Essex touched on, which were two cases fairly close to home: One was right in my city and the other was in a neighbouring riding.

The first was Theresa Vince. Theresa Vince was an HR training administrator in a Sears store in downtown Chatham. For many years, she was harassed by her immediate boss. Theresa was a wife, a mother and a grandmother, who just went to work every day to try to provide for her family and was subjected to, on a regular basis, harassment from her boss. It ended with that particular employer, that supervisor, shooting Theresa to death and then taking his own life.

That mirrors a similar situation with a nurse in Windsor, specifically in my riding, Lori Dupont. We just actually recognized that 10 years ago, on November 12—just recently, we recognized the 10-year anniversary of Lori’s passing. It was a similar situation. In this case, it was a doctor, Dr. Marc Daniel, whom Lori had dated for some time and had broken off the relationship. She continued to be harassed by this ex-boyfriend of hers and faced issues on a daily basis. But again, she had to go to work to provide, to make a living, and, as with most victims, felt like she had no choice but to continue to put up with this behaviour in order to just get by and just make a living. That case, as well, ended with this doctor taking Lori’s life and then he took his own.

It’s unfortunate that we continue to see a pattern of workplace violence and workplace harassment. Many of us just recognized the 26th anniversary of the shooting at École Polytechnique, where 14 women were killed just because they were women.

The member from Windsor—Tecumseh—unfortunately, I was out of the country, so I couldn’t attend—went to

a memorial put on by Unifor Local 444 in our area, where they recognized the death of a co-worker, Marylou, who was also a victim of sexual harassment and assault, and, unfortunately, her life ended as well.

So I think that it is incumbent upon all of us to not just teach our kids to just say no, not to just teach our sons and daughters that it’s okay to say no; we need to teach them that when someone says no to them, that no is no. We need to teach our kids that regardless of what obstacles you face in the workplace, you have a right to say, “I’m not comfortable here,” and that you have to be a strong advocate for yourself and you have to reach out to others to help you advocate.

1640

The victims of workplace violence and sexual harassment often don’t feel like they have any allies. They don’t feel like they have anyone to turn to. We need to encourage those in workplaces such as ours so that, if they’re facing such behaviour, if they have issues or if they suspect that someone else in the workplace is going through something like this, they need to come forward and they need to support the person who’s going through it and let them know that they do have support when they finally feel comfortable coming forward.

This bill has gone through committee and consultations, and I personally would like to thank everyone who appeared before the committee. It wasn’t easy for many of them to come and share their stories, to relive what it is that they’ve been through. Luckily, they can say that they did survive it. It leaves scars. They’re probably going to be dealing with this for the rest of their lives, but they survived it and they were able to muster the courage—it takes a lot of courage for them to come forward and share with people they don’t know, strangers, what it is they went through, share their stories and ask for help. I commend everybody who was comfortable coming forward and sharing their stories.

Frankly, I’d like to commend the committee as well, because I’m certain that it was not easy for them to listen to those stories and hear the horrible acts that were perpetrated on those who came forward and presented. Those will leave, I’m sure, scars on those people on the committee who listened to those terrible stories as well. Again, I’d just like to thank everybody who is sitting on the committee and anyone who has had the bravery to come forward and try to make changes for the better for those who come after them.

We know that social media, especially with school-aged children, has often become the chosen venue for harassment. What we don’t talk about often is that sometimes—and it’s interesting, because I just had a conversation with someone from the education sector about this yesterday. We don’t realize that sometimes it’s the students in the system who are actually—probably unknowingly—sexually harassing teachers. They don’t realize that some of the comments they make are uncomfortable and inappropriate. We need to make sure that the kids, starting at a very young age, understand what is and is not appropriate behaviour so that they

don't become adults who go on to model the behaviour of others before them.

We need to make sure that, if they have something going on in their own personal life, if there's something going on with a family member, they feel supported and they know they can come to school, share those stories and perhaps get help for whoever it is in their family that needs help.

Speaker, while we welcome the legislation that's before us today, as an effective opposition party we have a duty to point out how legislation could be improved, to reflect on what's not in a piece of legislation and to hold the government of the day accountable. As New Democrats, we'll be watching closely to make sure that this legislation comes with funding commitments and that it is regularly assessed and reported. I think that's a key piece to any legislation. You could put the legislation forward with all the best intentions, but if there isn't the funding to follow that up in some cases, or if there isn't monitoring of that legislation, you don't know how effective that legislation is. It's important that an important piece of legislation like this does have follow-up to see how effective it is.

As we progress—we are in a big age, as I said, of social media. We didn't have that years ago. We need to make sure that, as we go through the years, legislation like this is monitored to make sure that it's still effective. It might need to be changed. It may need to be tweaked as the years go by, and we need to make sure that it's still effective in supporting and protecting the people it was meant to serve.

Speaker, to reiterate, I think it's really important that those people in a work environment know that they have a right to say, "I don't feel safe here"; they have a right to go to their employer and feel like they're supported, feel that the people around them support them. For somebody going through it, it's not an easy thing for them to reach out and ask for help.

We need to make sure that any legislation that is in place is solid legislation, is effective legislation, is monitored legislation, and that when the time comes—because as I said, things have changed a lot over the years—adjustments are made to make sure that it's effectively serving the people it was meant to serve.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Further debate?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It is an honour to be able to rise in debate today, on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus and the constituents I represent in Nepean–Carleton and the wonderful city of Ottawa.

I would like to commend my colleagues across the entire chamber for taking a stand to say it's never okay.

I want to specifically thank the members who have spoken this afternoon. I've been able to listen to the members from Kitchener Centre, Cambridge, Windsor West, Essex, and my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. They said some very important names in this assembly, and I think it is worth saying

them over and over and over again, so that the women who died in this province at the hands of sexual violence will never be forgotten and will be trailblazers, according to us in this assembly, to do things the right way, to do better. So I am going to name Theresa Vince and Lori Dupont, as my colleagues from the Windsor area mentioned; and Anastasia Kuzyk, Carol Culleton and Nathalie Warmerdam, as my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke mentioned. Those women are why we're here today to debate this very important piece of legislation, Bill 132.

I congratulate the minister responsible, Ms. MacCharles, as well as my colleagues in this assembly who sat on the select committee. Their work was important, their work was meaningful, and their work will change Ontario.

In particular, I would like to say thank you to my colleague, who has defined herself with grace, dignity and foresight throughout this entire process. Laurie Scott, I want to say thank you for representing our caucus the best way you possibly could.

In 1993, the only survey in all of Canada that dealt with violence against women was undertaken by Statistics Canada. That one survey in 1993 said that half of the women in our country have suffered either violence or sexual violence. That means half of the women in this assembly have likely also experienced the same thing, and it's likely, if they haven't, that they know someone who has. That is a startling statistic and one that is over 20 years old. We must do better, everyone in this assembly, but even more than that, as a province, we must do better, and the template in order to do that is this legislation, Bill 132.

I want to talk a little bit more about some of the statistics that I borrowed from CBC, which were published in 2003. It said that of the half of women who have experienced physical or sexual violence, the most vulnerable of those women, the most vulnerable women in Canada, happen to be between the ages of 15 and 24. They're high school aged, they're university aged, and they're the ones who may or may not report being raped, sexually assaulted or abused. It is a group that, of reported incidences, is 42% higher than those of us who are a little bit older.

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It also suggested that there are more than 800,000 children in Canada today whose mother or themselves may be victimized. We have over 3,000 women in Canada who stay at homeless shelters to escape abuse. According to a CBC report in 2013, almost 500 women a day—a day—are turned away from a homeless shelter when they are trying to escape abuse.

Doesn't it make you proud in this assembly that today we're standing up for a piece of legislation that would make it that much easier for a woman who is being abused in her home to leave her abusive spouse or partner? Doesn't it make you proud that you may save a life and you may actually be able to allow this mother, this woman, to take her children away, and not to a

shelter, but maybe give her an opportunity to start her own life?

There are other statistics, too, that I saw—and I'll talk more about the bill—but I wanted to mention this one, because I see the member from Kingston and the Islands here and I think her first private member's motion was to talk about a call for murdered and missing aboriginal women. I supported her because of some of these changes. I know that it's now in the forefront; it was on the front page of today's *Ottawa Sun*. Many of the women who we're talking about are aboriginal, and I hope it makes members here proud that we are taking a stand for them as well.

They say that for evil to win, it means good people do nothing. For too long, I think, that has been the case. It didn't really change in this country—I mean, we observe December 6, but, unfortunately, Marc Lépine was not the only man to initiate violence against women.

I must say that I was angered—really angered—when I heard about the Jian Ghomeshi allegations. In fact, I made a public statement when I first learned of them. My gut instinct was: "This happened; I can tell," because a woman does not put herself out there and suggest that she has been violated that way unless she has been, especially when it's a major figure like that. I gave that woman the benefit of the doubt, and I'm going to recount two very brief examples for you of what I saw. The first was a friend of mine, a man a little bit older than me, who told me to take down my statement. He said, "Jian Ghomeshi is a public figure. You don't know what you're dealing with." I said, "Too bad. I'm not taking it down."

The second was a political adversary—also a male—who decided to deride me and tell me I was wrong: "Jian Ghomeshi is about culture. He couldn't have done this. You should take that tweet down." I said, "Absolutely not." I was angry, as I know every member of this assembly was angry, when they saw that come to light.

In fact, because of that incident, it was people like Laurie Scott and Tracy MacCharles and Lisa Gretzky who stood up and said, "It won't happen anymore—not under our watch. We are going to protect the women in this province"—and I am proud that they did. I think this is one of the finer moments, actually, that I have served in in the last nine and a half years: to watch members from all walks of life, from every political party and from every corner of this province, come together under a campaign and support the work of the government without any politics but what's best for women. What's best, as I might say, for young women, too—particularly those on our university campuses and in our high schools—who, as I've stated before, according to Stats Canada, are likely the most vulnerable.

When I look at this legislation, I see a good action plan. We're going to strengthen provisions related to sexual violence and harassment in the workplace, on campus, in housing and through the civil claim process.

It will strengthen support through hospital-based sexual and domestic violence treatment centres to

maintain 24/7 access to excellent, appropriate and timely care. There will be more public education, more front-line training—up-to-date training—tools to identify best practices, and to support compassionate and sensitive responses from law enforcement officers. The list goes on, Speaker. The list here goes on and has responded to a growing demand and a growing need in the province.

What we need to do is to be national leaders. And I believe the select committee, through their non-partisan work, was able to achieve that. I think that is going to be something that we need permanency on.

The people we need to reach are the people who are not reporting sexual violence, the people who are not escaping from a doomed relationship. We need to not only educate people that it's not okay to sexually assault someone; we need, also, to educate young women across Ontario that it's okay to come forward. We need to give them the courage. We need to give them the conviction, because once a woman has been assaulted, once she has been violated, it will change her entire life. And for all of us in this assembly, it is our job to make her life easier.

That's why I'm proud of the work that my colleague Laurie Scott has initiated in response to another issue that we have heard a lot about recently, which is human trafficking. I think that is a critical and meaningful piece of legislation that needs to be included. She had a motion moving that forward, and I think it would be not only relevant, but important that we follow that up. Human trafficking just doesn't happen on the other side of the world. Human trafficking happens here.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Ninety-seven per cent are Canadian-born.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My colleague Ms. Scott tells me that 97% of the women who are trafficked in Ontario are Canadian-born.

Think about who's vulnerable. I ask members to think about who's vulnerable. It is those girls between the ages of 15 and 24. I can't stress enough how important it is for us in this assembly to protect young women. Fifteen to 24: Those are kids in high school. Those are kids in their second year of university. Those are young women who are starting their first jobs.

Half of the women in Canada have been either physically or sexually violated. I can't say those statistics enough, because we have to impress upon ourselves that it could happen to anyone. For us to have this debate today I think signals the fact that we're taking this seriously. I think it signals the fact that we're creating awareness. I think it signals the fact that, yes, we're serious about putting a law forward in order to protect young women.

I profoundly hope that when we leave here today, we will not stop talking about this in a serious fashion. I'm looking forward to my colleagues doing a major media event on Thursday. I am looking forward to them drawing attention to this critical issue in the province on sexual violence and harassment, and I'm looking forward to the media allowing us to get that message out, that people are taking this very seriously.

But I urge every member here not to stop talking about it when you go home for Christmas, not to stop talking about it when you spend some time with your family and not to stop talking about it when you get to your constituency. In fact, I firmly believe that the work of Tracy MacCharles, Laurie Scott and Lisa Gretzky should be on all of our minds this holiday season as we remind people—

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Hon. Tracy MacCharles: And Peggy Sattler.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: —and Peggy Sattler—should be on the minds of all of us this holiday season because we are the best at communicating what happens here to our constituents. We are the best at going into our communities and rallying for causes. We are the best to clearly enunciate why there is a problem and how it can be fixed. I know that all members will do that, and I ask you all to do that for the 50% of Canadian women who have been affected by this, particularly those young women. That breaks my heart.

My colleague John Yakabuski, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, put forward Bill 130, and I would be remiss if I did not call for that to also be passed. While we support this bill, as Progressive Conservatives, we of course always want to see the best bill pass in this assembly, so we will be urging for Mr. Yakabuski's bill to be supported, and for Ms. Scott's motion for an anti-human-trafficking task force to be established. We will reinforce probation and parole services in Ontario; restore partner assault response programs back to a 16-week model, notify crown attorneys when offenders refuse to sign their orders, and implement the government's Domestic Violence Death Review Committee's risk assessment tool to flag high-risk and repeat offenders.

It is never okay—never. I think an important step in the right direction is the campaign that started before this bill is going to be implemented. I've seen it. I've seen it at restaurants across the province. I've seen it in bus shelters. I've heard it on the radio. We can't become—what's the word where you continue to hear it, but it's not penetrating anymore? We can't allow that to happen. We're going to have to be creative, inventive. We're going to have to continue to take this across the province.

Two places that I find this is very helpful, and I really appreciate the advertisements being part of—I have a 10-year-old daughter. I spend a lot of time at hockey arenas throughout Ottawa. She plays hockey. I wish, when I was a kid, I had the same opportunities to play at the Sensplex. Last weekend, she actually got to play at the Canadian Tire Centre with both the University of Ottawa and Carleton University hockey players. I'm really proud of her.

One of the things I like is when I go to the University of Ottawa, which I do every weekend, and Carleton University, which I do every weekend—I feel like I should be paying them a lot of tuition, though I'm not taking any classes, just watching a lot of cold hockey early in the morning. If you go to the bathroom, every

single stall, every single one of them, has a “It's Never Okay” poster. It's reinforcing to women on our campuses that they do not have to put up with unwanted advances. If there's one thing I leave you all with today, that's where I think there needs to be a great deal of resources applied: on university campuses. It's a place where I feel we need to protect students the most. It's a place where I believe, when we're sending our students off to learn, to educate and to be enlightened—I do not want them to be enlightened by being sexually abused. I don't, and I know no member here wants us to. I know that's why we've got this campaign in place. It's why I'm proud to support that campaign, and it is why I am so proud to be a colleague of Laurie Scott in our caucus, who I believe has ushered this perfectly through our caucus and our party.

As I conclude my remarks, if I may say thank you to three party leaders as well: Ms. Horwath, Mr. Brown and Premier Wynne. Each of them has made it clear that this is something we support. Our leader the other day said that there should be zero tolerance; not only I do agree with it and applaud it, I think that should be the standard that we set here today.

With that, I say thank you. I appreciate the opportunity to debate on almost any bill, but on this particular bill, I think it was an honour for me to be part of this debate, and I am just grateful I had that opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments? Questions and comments? Seeing there are none, further debate?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: First, I want to say that I'll be sharing my time with the Minister of Education and the member from Kingston and the Islands.

I just heard some great, great debates here in this House today. It's so nice to hear the collaboration on an issue that's so important for all Ontarians. Certainly, I am very proud to rise today and speak on Bill 132. I would say that it's a very important bill, because it will strengthen the laws regarding sexual harassment and violence, and create a safer society for women and victims of sexual abuse.

Cette année, j'ai eu le grand plaisir et le privilège de travailler avec mes collègues de tous les côtés de la Chambre comme membre du Comité spécial de la violence et du harcèlement à caractère sexuel.

Our work on this committee, soon to be tabled—actually, on Thursday, December 10—coincides with the minister's work on strengthening the laws protecting women. Many of us who sat on this committee heard deputations across the province from various groups, agencies and individuals on the challenges women and sexual assault survivors face in the province. The message from many people who spoke before the committee was that we must do more.

Ce projet de loi fait partie de nos efforts pour protéger ceux et celles qui ont besoin de protection, et je suis fière qu'on parle de la violence et du harcèlement à caractère sexuel dans notre société ici en Chambre.

The ministry, along with our select committee, has been working to raise public awareness about sexual

violence and harassment through the It's Never Okay action plan. As part of this campaign, poignant ads brought the issue to the forefront and became part of the broader conversation on how we can better protect women. These ads raised important questions about societal assumptions on sexual violence and harassment, and created a conversation about the responsibilities of individuals. By driving this conversation, we bring this issue out of the darkness, and meet it head-on—something that we should do because this is a conversation for people of all gender identities and sexual orientations.

While our society has been aware of the shortcomings of protection for women through various news stories, we have all too often moved on without taking concrete steps to address the very serious issues. But we in this House saw the greatest need to address this societal issue—an issue of a women's rights and equality—and the ministry has been hard at work creating this legislation that will update our laws to create stronger protection for women.

J'aimerais élaborer sur ces étapes concrètes de ce projet de loi qui prend des mesures pour protéger les femmes et pour créer des espaces sûrs.

If passed, this bill will create safer campuses by having all post-secondary institutions bring forward stand-alone sexual violence policies. The bill also proposes interim measures for campuses by creating supports and services that will protect survivors by mitigating potential harm during sexual violence reporting, investigations and adjudications.

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Bill 132 will, if passed, strengthen the civil claim process by removing the current two-year limitation period for applications based on sexual or domestic violence brought to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. As we know, healing is very personal and takes time, which is why the changes to the civil claims are so important.

Trop souvent, durant nos députations en comité, on a entendu parler de harcèlement sexuel qui est arrivé dans les lieux qu'on pourrait considérer vraiment sécuritaires, comme les collèges et universités, ainsi que les lieux de travail.

While we hear of these incidents in the news, there are so many that don't make headlines and go unreported. If we still need to look further into why we must act, just take a look at our press clippings here in the House today. Page 24 is titled "Unwelcome in Thunder Bay." Let me just read the first sentence: "There is an aboriginal woman who is afraid to speak of a vicious sexual assault."

This is why we need to take action now. We cannot have this continue in our province. We cannot keep letting down our women. We must protect them and build a better society for all.

But I want to emphasize that it is not a partisan issue. I know my colleagues opposite support doing more to protect women. This is an Ontario issue, and we must all do more, as legislators, so we do not fail women from Thunder Bay to the college campuses to the workplace who are suffering every single day across the province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm delighted to be able to speak to Bill 132.

One of the things that I thought I would like to do, actually, is to set a bit of context around some of the other things that are part of the sexual violence action plan, but which don't actually require legislation. I want to thank my colleague, the minister responsible for women's issues, for the great work that she's done in putting the sexual violence action plan together.

One of the things that she did was to set up a permanent Roundtable on Violence Against Women to bring experts together where there actually can be a continuing discussion. Some people have mentioned the fact that sometimes we pay a lot of attention to this and then we sort of forget about it. The round table will be a permanent round table which will allow the experts to continue to talk.

We in Guelph are very, very proud, Speaker, that the co-chair of that group is Sly Castaldi, who is actually the CEO of Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis. I know that she has been reporting back to me about what a great pleasure it has been to work together with so many of her colleagues from around the province.

They had a wonderful, very successful conference just a few weeks ago, where people from all over the province came together to discuss the issues here—

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: And the world.

Hon. Liz Sandals: All over the world, the minister says. That was very exciting.

Another thing which was very exciting for us in Guelph, Speaker, was that the Premier actually came to visit Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis. The reason that she came to visit was that she chose our site to announce that there would be additional funding for the sexual assault centres all around the province. That was certainly welcomed in a very positive way.

But I thought I would also talk a bit about what we're actually doing at the Ministry of Education, because various people have mentioned the fact that we need ongoing education and we need to change the attitude of our young people. We need our young people to really internalize the message that you see in the advertising: It's Never Okay. A number of the speakers this afternoon have talked about the fact that we need to start doing that at quite a young age.

That's why we start talking to children in grade 1, not about sexual assault per se, but telling children that if somebody touches you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, even though you're just a little person and it's an adult, you have the right to say no. It's very important that we teach even little children that they have the right to say no if somebody touches them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Many people have asked, "Why is it important in the grade 1 curriculum to give children the correct name for body parts?" It is on the advice of police and children's aid, who deal with children who have been sexually

assaulted. It's because experience shows that if a child has been sexually assaulted, they're more likely to tell a trusted adult what has happened if they have the correct words to describe what has happened to them. That's why the curriculum is written that way.

It's actually, oddly, not a change. It has been that way since 1998, but that's why it is that way, Speaker, so that children have the understanding and the confidence to report if something inappropriate happens to them.

That's the foundation we build on throughout the curriculum, as children mature and are able to discuss relationships: that we talk about healthy relationships and how important it is that you must always have consent from your partner. You must never, ever do anything to your partner if your partner says no.

That's one of the messages that we try to get across in today's curriculum that didn't used to always be in the old curriculum. The curriculum that certainly I would have had when I went to school wouldn't have even touched that with a 10-foot pole. But we know that we have to change attitudes, and we do that with education.

Some of the other members have mentioned the problem that social media can bring about. We try also to introduce the topic of safe Internet use and have our children understand that if you wouldn't say it in person, if you wouldn't do it in person, you mustn't do it on the Internet; that would be inappropriate.

There are a lot of things going on in our education system that change the way we teach our children. Hopefully, that will have a dramatic influence on what happens to the behaviour of our children, who will eventually be our young adults and our older adults, and stop sexual assault.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the member from Kingston and the Islands.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: It gives me great pleasure to rise today and speak on this incredibly important bill.

In March of this year, I was truly delighted, honoured and so proud to be part of this government when we announced that we were going to launch the sexual violence and harassment campaign. I would like to commend the minister for women's issues and our Premier for being so forthright with that issue and for responding to some very urgent issues that were in the media, taking action right away.

I'm also very proud that we have a permanent round table. I think this is extremely important. Circumstances will change, programs will change and people's attitudes will change; and we all need to be responsive and provide that wraparound care to women in our communities who have suffered at the hands of another in a sexually violent way.

It's true that we still have a long way to go, and it's true that men have a role to play. And because they have a role to play, I decided to launch a photographic slogan campaign in my riding, and many men have come forward and had their picture taken with a slogan saying that it's not okay. I think it's important, as MPPs in our ridings, that we can provide these opportunities for all

people to be involved when they want to be and feel they need to be.

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We have a responsibility to attack this from all angles. Schools need to be involved. Families need to be involved. They need to be active in telling stories and, as the Minister of Education has said, in informing their children that it is never okay to be touched inappropriately and it's never okay to do that to somebody else.

Everybody has personal stories, and we've all heard many of them here today. My own mother, on her deathbed, told me a story. She didn't actually say that she was sexually violated, but she did tell me a story about her grandmother, who was born in the 1800s, advising her to be careful about the tinmen in Britain. They roamed the streets and collected tin, going from town to town.

This kind of behaviour has been going on for a long, long time, and I don't need to tell anybody that here.

When I was growing up, the stats were that one in four women was likely to have experienced sexual assault in their lifetime. Now, I understand, it's one in three, and the member from Nepean-Carleton has mentioned that it's 50%. These are incredible numbers, and we all need to take responsibility together.

Women should not have to worry about what they wear, where they walk or the way they walk, or that these actions should incite sexual violence and being violated in the most personal part of her body.

The time for this gross, violent behaviour to go unchallenged is up. It's time that this behaviour stops. And it's not just young people; it's people of all ages. They all need to think about their behaviour, and they need to stop these violent acts.

I would also like to commend the committee for the work that they have done. They've done an absolutely incredible job. I had the pleasure of attending the committee when it was in Kingston and the Islands, and I was really impressed with the testimony that came forward, and the way in which our community rallied around the committee's work, and the way that they told stories about how different programs could relate to one another, and how some women came forward and told very personal stories.

The most astounding story was from one woman who was violated by a stranger and held captive for several hours. It took a lot of courage for that woman to come forward. I was so proud of her. I had been working with her and her father for quite some time. But when the story was told in the media, I couldn't help but feel responsible that that woman would feel revictimized. So there's a responsibility on the part of the media as well. They have a role to play here.

We've heard, and many of us know, stories that go back to the beginning of time. Bill 132 does provide the template and the structure that we need to work with to change the future for women in our province and in our country. I believe that we are leading the charge, and we should all be proud of that. We do need to protect the

vulnerable—and the vulnerable are not just from the ages of 15 to 24.

Another story that came to me after the committee came to Kingston and the Islands was one of a mother who came upon her daughter being violated by her husband. These kinds of things happen in our communities, and they have to stop.

Following the launch of my own photographic campaign, more and more people came forward; and this is progress. This is what needs to happen. The conversation needs to be in the forefront so that women can feel comfortable coming forward.

In closing, we've learned today that the federal government has entered the first phase of a national public inquiry on the missing and murdered aboriginal women. They will start by interviewing families, and this is only the beginning. We have a lot more work to do, and I am so proud that we are starting now. This is the right direction to go in. Thank you, everyone who has come forward to speak on this bill. Thank you for the support, and thank you for giving me the time in this chamber.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments? Seeing how there are none, further debate? I recognize the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, for recognizing me to speak on this very important bill, Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act. It's my great honour to speak on this bill. I will be sharing my time with the MPP for Burlington. I just wanted to get that out, as I was getting stares from other people. Everybody's breathing now in this place.

I'm really honoured to speak on this bill for a very important reason: One big element of this bill, especially schedule 6, dealing with the Residential Tenancies Act, is the adoption of a private member's bill that I have tabled twice, once in 2010 and the other time in 2011, and I'll speak to that in a second. But, most importantly, I think we all have to acknowledge how important this issue is; that is, putting an absolute end to sexual violence and harassment in our society.

There is no doubt that the majority—the large, vast majority—of victims of sexual violence and harassment are, unfortunately, still women. Men receive that as well, and people from the LGBT community also suffer from sexual violence and harassment, but women, in general, are the large number of it.

I really want to read a part of the preamble of this bill, which I think really highlights in strong terms the resolve of this Legislature when it comes to ending sexual violence and harassment. It states:

“The government will not tolerate sexual violence, sexual harassment or domestic violence. Protecting all Ontarians from their devastating impact is a top government priority and is essential for the achievement of a fair and equitable society.

“All Ontarians would benefit from living without the threat and experience of sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and other forms of abuse, and all Ontarians have a role to play in stopping them.”

Speaker, I don't think you will find anybody in this chamber, or among Ontarians, who will disagree with this very important sentiment. And I'm very happy to see it articulated in this bill, because we need to boldly say that there is no tolerance for sexual violence and harassment and domestic violence, and we need to work collectively as legislators and as society at large to put an end to that.

There are many elements in this bill that give action to that. There's the work, as we know, that the government is doing through the It's Never Okay action plan. And, of course, there's the important work that the all-party select committee has done in listening to Ontarians and putting recommendations forward as to how we put an end to it. There is real momentum here from all members of the Legislature, women and men, in our commitment to put an end to sexual violence and harassment and domestic violence.

In that regard, I just wanted to share a little bit about schedule 6 of this bill, which I'm very excited and proud to see as part of this bill. It's a result of a private member's bill that I first tabled in 2010: Bill 53, the Escaping Domestic Violence Act. It was debated at second reading in this Legislature and, thanks to all members, it was passed unanimously at that stage. After the 2011 election, I had the honour again of introducing the bill as Bill 22, and I am very excited to see that this bill is now part of a government bill and will become a reality.

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In the meantime since I tabled that private member's bill, the same provisions around amending the Residential Tenancies Act, making it easier for victims of domestic and sexual violence to be able to terminate their lease, came into effect in two provinces, Manitoba and Nova Scotia. I want to thank them for taking the lead. In fact, I distinctly remember getting a phone call from an MLA from Manitoba asking for a copy of the bill that I had tabled, and I'm glad they got there first. They did the right thing and so did Nova Scotia, and now Ontario is moving forward.

Very quickly, I want to share where this bill came from. This bill came from a woman named Sarah. Sarah lived in my community in 2010. She approached me. She wanted to sit down with me, as many constituents do with all of us. I sat down with her for a meeting and there she told me her story. She's a brave young woman. She's a single mom of a beautiful daughter. Sarah told me her story of abuse, of domestic violence that she suffered from for three years. It took three years of hard work and resiliency and succumbing to that kind of abuse until she and her daughter were finally able to flee that abusive relationship.

But soon after she fled, she realized that the apartment where she lived with her abuser was in her name; she was the actual tenant. Her name was on the tenancy agreement, and there were several months left on that lease for which she was personally liable, responsible for paying. She contacted her landlord. The landlord refused, saying,

"No, you've got to live through the term of the lease," which she could not do because her abuser was still living there. He had access to that place and that was not a safe place for her to be. She's tenacious; she's a fighter. She kept talking to her landlord. The landlord got a soft spot in his or her heart—I thank them for that—and they did an early termination.

But that's when Sarah then came to me and spoke to her MPP, saying, "There's a flaw here in the law. We need to make it easier for victims of domestic violence, sexual harassment or sexual violence to be able to get out of those leases if that's the reason they're leaving." That's what allowed me to start work on this bill. She was of great help to me in terms of doing some of the research. We worked together, and we drafted the Escaping Domestic Violence Act. I am thrilled that that one woman's plight, which is symbolic of the plight of many women in our society, unfortunately, resulted in the creation of this bill.

I also want to say, as an interesting point, that Sarah did not want this bill to be called Sarah's bill or Sarah's law, because she said to me that this is more than her. It captures a lot of other victims of domestic and sexual violence. Therefore, we entitled it the Escaping Domestic Violence Act. It is a testament and salute to Sarah that this will now become, hopefully, with the permission of this House, law in Ontario.

Sarah and I keep in touch. She calls me on a regular basis, finding out the status of the bill. It was a very happy call when I had to tell her that this is part of the government bill. Hopefully, she'll get an opportunity to speak to the committee as well, if she feels comfortable doing so. She has been doing a lot of education around this particular issue. I know Sarah wants to be a lawyer, and she will make a very, very good lawyer one day. I know she's working hard towards that goal as well.

But from my perspective, Bill 132, and particularly schedule 6 of the bill, really crystallizes to me what our roles are as legislators. That's exactly what I think we're supposed to do. We are representatives of the people we are elected to represent. We are responsible to listen to their stories and give some expression to their stories. Sometimes that is in the form of legislation; other times it's in the form of advocacy, asking questions in question period, or impressing upon the government or our community to do things differently. It comes in different shapes and forms. That's what makes us the agents of change: We give expression to those voices that may not be able to amplify their points of view.

This is one direct example of a young woman who, I'm sure, at a certain point felt that there was nobody to listen to her, that there was nobody paying attention to her. The credit goes to her resiliency, to her tenacity, that she never took no for an answer. Not only did she take that bold step of fleeing from that abusive relationship, but then she did not just sit on her laurels; she wanted to take that and make a bigger change. It's tough to come to your MPP and tell your personal story of that nature. It's not an easy thing to do. But she did it, and she was

persistent. She made such a compelling case—she had done the research—that it allowed her representative to move that issue forward, and now here it is in the form of Bill 132.

I just want to thank all the members for their support and their collective work on this bill, and on the broader issue of sexual violence and harassment. I look forward to working with all members in making sure that we put an end to sexual violence, sexual harassment and domestic violence in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'll recognize the member from Burlington.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I'm honoured to stand in the House today to speak about Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act.

Back in the fall, in the midst of the Jian Ghomeshi news and multiple allegations of sexual misconduct on Parliament Hill, and with a vibrant discussion taking place amongst members of this House, our Premier, Kathleen Wynne, called for an all-party committee of the Legislature to examine sexual assault and harassment in the workplace and beyond.

As members will know, the form and function—and if I may say, the tremendous benefit—of a select committee format is that it is an all-party, non-partisan approach to public policy. We are at our best when we work together. Quite simply, like other select committees that have tackled societal issues like mental health and addictions—sexual violence and harassment is one of those issues that necessitates a call to action.

As soon as I learned about the committee, I asked the Premier if I could be a part of it, and she was kind enough to grant that wish. I've been honoured to do so, and I want to take this moment to thank and recognize all of my colleagues in this House who have been part of the select committee and its work. It has been a pleasure to serve with them.

I was also especially motivated to be part of this conversation because of work that I had done in 1992, which I think underscores just how long this issue has been part of our society—and even longer, of course. While at the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, I had the privilege of working with women across Canada on the rape shield law. That particular piece of legislation, at that time, was passed by the Parliament of Canada. It dealt with issues that affected women who came forward and reported sexual assault. It meant that their behaviour, what they were wearing, what they drank, what they said and what they did couldn't be used against them in a court of law. That was an important step forward; but it still means, unfortunately, that there is much work to be done.

The witnesses that we heard from at our committees across the province—over 145 in all—shared with us deeply personal information, with grace, dignity and courage. We received hundreds of useful and compelling recommendations from all across the province. The response that we had to our work gave us all an indication of just how pervasive the issue really is. Indeed, we

had to add additional public hearings to accommodate the demand to testify. Much of what we heard was shocking but not completely unexpected.

I started my career in 1985. Sexual harassment was as much of an issue then as it is now. I've also worked in many male-dominated sectors where this kind of behaviour is, I'm sorry to say, still commonplace; but it shouldn't be.

It's happening in homes and workplaces, on school campuses, on our reserves—and it's happening by people known to survivors. Indeed, in close to 80% of instances, the victims know their perpetrator.

As much as the stories we heard were difficult to hear, they were very important to hear.

When it comes to sexual violence and harassment and where it's happening, and to whom—it's happening in our indigenous communities and to our indigenous people. We heard today that the federal government announced the inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women, which is an important step forward for all of us. The legacy of the residential schools is a powerful and multi-generational stain on our nation's history. The impacts are still being felt, and we saw that and we heard that in our committee.

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The aboriginal and indigenous experience of sexual violence is much more pronounced than the Canadian population at large. Almost every indigenous individual and organization that came forward stressed the lingering impact that the residential school system continues to have today in their communities and in their families. An astounding eight out of 10 indigenous women have reported experiencing some sort of violence in their lives. They are approximately three times more likely than non-indigenous women to experience spousal violence.

In the workplace, sexual violence and harassment is a common and unfortunate reality. There is a range of behaviours all across workplaces. In 2009, our government made amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act to address the issues of workplace harassment and violence. This legislation requires employers to, among other things, devise violence and harassment policies and programs, and to implement them. They educate employees, conduct assessments to measure the risk of workplace violence and protect workers from domestic violence in the workplace.

Unfortunately, despite this legislation, five years later, victims still hesitate to come forward and report the behaviour for fear of losing their job, retaliation, lack of support, language barriers and a lack of information about the available options for reporting. The legislative proposals in Bill 132 would enhance employer requirements regarding workplace harassment programs and would also add specific new employer duties to protect workers from harassment in the workplace, including sexual harassment. Also included is the duty to ensure that incidents and complaints are properly investigated.

During our select committee, we heard that sexual violence and harassment is pervasive on our campuses;

and indeed, ongoing stories in the media remind us that on many campuses there exists a rape culture that needs to change. We learned that the majority of on-campus sexual assaults occur during the first eight weeks on campus and that most are committed by someone known to the victim.

Despite having countless avenues through which to implement education programs and policies on campus, unfortunately, some colleges and universities have been slow to respond, and they respond very poorly to reports of sexual violence and harassment on their campuses. Bill 132 would amend the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act to set out legislative requirements for stand-alone sexual violence policies for each institution, developed with student input and reviewed at least every three years.

We heard about where sexual violence and harassment is happening and who it's happening to, but beyond the fact that it is happening, period, are the barriers all victims face when they have the courage to come forward: victim-blaming, disbelief, stigmatization and shaming. In short, not reporting is the norm.

While we heard that reporting is not necessarily the path for every survivor in terms of their healing, for those who do want to report and who seek to report, much work needs to be done despite the rape shield law I mentioned a few moments ago. When it came back into force in the early 1990s, those who were there and those who took part in it thought, "Jeez, we made a major step forward," but unfortunately, it wasn't enough."

As the MPP from Kingston mentioned a few minutes ago, when we were there during our select committee, we heard from a young woman who had been raped by a stranger. She was drugged. Her testimony was so raw, so real, so compelling and so heartfelt, it left us all very emotional and in tears. There wasn't a dry eye in the room that day. She was well educated, smart, beautiful and articulate. She underscored the reality that this isn't an issue limited by income or education level, by skin colour or age. She made us realize that this could have happened to any one of us. She was us.

She reported her rape and her perpetrator was convicted, but the means to get there and her journey were extremely difficult. The intrusion on her private life by the justice system prevented her from healing. She couldn't journal her feelings for risk of it being used against her in court, so that the defence could try to call into question her mental state. This is why I'm so proud to say that this bill will remove the limitation period for civil sexual assault claims, acknowledging that healing takes time and allowing individuals to come forward when they feel that they are ready.

Our committee heard an endless list of constructive, logical and inspired ideas and recommendations on how we all can address the systemic nature of sexual violence and how we can better support victims of harassment. Witnesses from across the province spoke of the key role played by sexual assault and domestic violence treatment centres—agencies like Halton Women's Place in my

riding—and the urgent need for more services, in addition to the importance of consistent and stable funding.

When it comes to sexual violence, it is estimated that about one in three Canadian women will experience sexual assault in their adult life. Think of that, Speaker. Statistics indicate that 39% of women report having experienced at least one incident of sexual assault since the age of 16.

A realization that so many of us have experienced harassment and violence in our workplaces is also very compelling. It isn't something that's part of our job, but part of a larger systemic issue, something that we must all have a hand in changing. Bill 132 will do just that. We owe this to our daughters, our nieces, our sons and nephews, and we owe it to ourselves.

There is an understanding that the roots of violence, including both domestic and sexual violence, are multifaceted. They are often rooted in poverty and in inequality, which places women out of the balance of power in their relationships.

I know that this single piece of legislation will not eliminate the problem of sexual violence and harassment, but it certainly goes a long way in addressing many of issues that come with it. I know, too, that all members of this House join me in agreeing that we must act, Speaker. The time has come for us, as legislators, to make a difference. This is our chance. Let's speak with one voice.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments? Further debate?

Ms. MacCharles has moved second reading of Bill 132, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related matters. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 30-minute bell.

But hold on to the bell; I have a deferral motion.

"To the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly:

"Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on second reading of Bill 132 be deferred until deferred votes on Wednesday, December 9, 2015."

Second reading vote deferred.

HOUSE SITTINGS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Orders of the day? I recognize the deputy government House leader.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I actually have a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding adjournment of the debate this evening.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The deputy House leader is seeking unanimous consent. Is there consent? Agreed.

Deputy government House leader.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move that, notwithstanding the order of the House dated Monday, November 30, 2015, when the House adjourns this afternoon, it shall stand adjourned until 9 a.m. on Wednesday, December 9, 2015.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Bradley has moved unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding adjournment of the debate this evening: "I move that, notwithstanding the order of the House dated Monday, November 30, 2015, when the House adjourns this afternoon, it shall stand adjourned until 9 a.m. on Wednesday, December 9, 2015." Does the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Orders of the day? Deputy government House leader.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Shall the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

The House adjourned at 1749.

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Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
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Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
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Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
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Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
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Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
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McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
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Natyshak, Taras (NDP) Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Essex Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Singh, Jagmeet (NDP) Smith, Todd (PC) Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB) Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB) Taylor, Monique (NDP) Thibeault, Glenn (LIB) Thompson, Lisa M. (PC) Vanthof, John (NDP) Vernile, Daiene (LIB) Walker, Bill (PC) Wilson, Jim (PC)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton Prince Edward–Hastings Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud Toronto–Danforth Mississauga–Erindale Hamilton Mountain Sudbury Huron–Bruce Timiskaming–Cochrane Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound Simcoe–Grey	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
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Comité spécial de la violence et du harcèlement à caractère
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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Han Dong, Sylvia Jones
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Kathryn McGarry, Eleanor McMahon
Taras Natyshak, Peggy Sattler
Laurie Scott, Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

First Session, 41st Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 41^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 9 December 2015

Mercredi 9 décembre 2015



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 9 December 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 9 décembre 2015

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUDGET MEASURES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR

LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES

Mr. Bradley, on behalf of Mr. Sousa, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 144, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact or amend certain other statutes / *Projet de loi 144, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter ou à modifier d'autres lois.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Deputy House leader?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the parliamentary assistant, the member from York South–Weston, and with the Minister of Finance.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Hon. James J. Bradley: This is an exceedingly important bill for the government of Ontario, of course, because what it in effect does is it fulfills the commitments made by the government in the 2015 budget, and it further implements our economic plan to build up Ontario. It makes many changes spanning several different ministries and, if passed, it would enact five new statutes and amend a number of other statutes. That's why there has been considerable debate devoted to this particular piece of legislation. The bill implements necessary changes in order to continue to implement our economic plan to build Ontario up, as I indicated. It's investing in people's talents and skills. We know that's the strength of the province of Ontario.

We are making the largest investment in public infrastructure—over \$130 billion over the next 10 years; that's the largest in Ontario's history. It is designed, of course, to create jobs—which it will—but the advantage of infrastructure investments are the following: They, first of all, generate a lot of economic activity that creates jobs. That's in the short term and the medium term. Even more important, perhaps—although, to those involved in the construction jobs, that's exceedingly important—but in the longer run, it leaves a legacy which is very important to our province.

All of us know of roads that require considerable work: some you're repaving the roads, you're reconstructing those roads; in other cases, you're actually constructing new roads for the province to enable economic activity to take place and for people to travel from one end of the province to the other.

We're also involved in new transit projects right across the province. Speaker, in your own city, the city of Hamilton, there is considerable work to be done in terms of public transit, and there's a significant investment of somewhere in the neighbourhood of a billion dollars for that purpose. I know that the people of Hamilton are looking forward to being able to move from one part of the city to the other more expeditiously.

Also, the commuter traffic taking place that goes into the GTA from various parts of the province is jammed at the present time. If you and I were to drive into the city of Toronto in the morning—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'd like to tell the government side that I believe one of your ministers is speaking, and it's really loud over there.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: We're doing really well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Yes, I know. You're being very friendly, but very loud.

Continue.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Public transit is exceedingly important for the province because it allows us to free up that traffic; it allows people to move from one end of the province to the other. At the present time, it's a major challenge.

Driving in from St. Catharines—I carry a good deal of material with me back and forth so I'm really compelled to have to drive into Toronto, but many people from various parts of the province would, if they had the alternative, prefer to have the public transit option. But that requires very significant expenditures, first of all, in terms of capital; that is, building the transit itself. Second and as important, in the longer term, is the cost of operating these systems. One must look at the fact, however, that there is a great cost to keeping the roads up to date. Often people will say, "I pay to have those roads kept up to date." There's a gas tax and a number of other taxes which are devoted to all government expenditures, including the construction of roads, but also by freeing up that pathway—those roads—by having public transit available to people is much more convenient.

Secondly, it is also very good for what we would refer to in our particular circumstances as the environment. At the present time there are people from all over the world

gathered in the city of Paris engaged in very serious discussions and hopefully coming forward with an agreement that will deal with the issue of climate change. One of the things that expenditures in the field of transit contribute to is the betterment of the environment.

I can recall that at one time in the province of Ontario you had several, shall we say, smog days, as they were called in the province. You'd come into, particularly the GTA, and even other parts of Ontario—there would be smog all over the province. Now those days are rare—at least, they have been in recent years. I attribute a good deal of that to the closing of the coal-fired electricity plants in the province. But also there have been improvements made in terms of emissions from other sources, including mobile sources, which are the vehicles that we have in the province.

We are also creating a dynamic, innovative environment where business thrives, and we're strengthening retirement security. One of the issues I think that people identified—there was a pretty good consensus; not an entire consensus in the province—was that when people are saving for their retirement, what was available in the present form of the Canada Pension Plan and other pension provisions was not adequate for many people in the province. Indeed, there are a lot of people, as you would recognize, Speaker, who don't have that option available to them: a defined benefit pension plan.

0910

In fact, the private sector in particular is trying to negotiate their way out of defined benefit pension plans; that is, where a person can look forward to a specific amount of money in a specific period of time. Negotiations are pushing in favour of a defined contribution pension plan, which usually goes into what we would call an RSP, with no guarantee of how much that would produce. For instance, if a person were to contribute to something that was risky, the chances are that they could lose everything. If they were to invest conservatively, we recognize that they are not going to have enough money for retirement. So that is one of the components.

I do want to allow the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance, and the Minister of Finance, to both elaborate on this. So I will yield the floor at this time, with your permission when you recognize her, of course, to the parliamentary assistant, the member for York South–Weston.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Hon. James J. Bradley: No, we're sharing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It's a 40-minute rotation all day, and you go in turn.

The member from Prince Edward–Hastings.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me this morning. It's a pleasure to rise today and speak to Bill 144, but only because it is always an honour to rise in the House and speak; it's not a pleasure to address this bill, because this bill shouldn't even exist.

I know that we have a long history of omnibus bills in parliamentary systems. In fact, the history stretches all

the way back to 1968, when the first bill was introduced as part of a review of the Criminal Code. However, the practice of introducing omnibus bills remained a fairly restrained practice and stayed fairly consistent to a theme, which was that the omnibus bill that was being introduced would amend all bills toward a common policy aim.

In 1968, reviewing the Criminal Code required amending several acts to change the legal status of different offences. Other omnibus bills over the years have included items such as the national energy plan and the free trade agreement. However, it wasn't until the late 1980s and early 1990s that omnibus bills became common practice at the federal and provincial levels.

At first, Speakers actually had to rule whether or not such bills were out of order. What we now know is that it would have been better if they hadn't opened the door or, if they had, at least introduced a litmus test that omnibus legislation would have to meet in order to be introduced in the first place. However, at the time, the practice was such that the bills were limited to a single matter in terms of size and scope. They dealt with one issue, not like what we are dealing with today. It wasn't until the omnibus budget bill, or omnibus bills to enact budget matters, such as the one we are debating this morning, became commonplace that they became a problem.

The decision handed down governing omnibus bills in this House actually originates in Speaker Sauvé's ruling regarding a 1981 omnibus bill brought in by the Trudeau government. Speaker Sauvé said, "It may be that the House should accept rules or guidelines as to the form and content of omnibus bills, but in that case the House, and not the Speaker, must make those rules." It was that quotation that Speaker McLean used in this chamber in 1995 when ruling on a question of privilege raised by, among others, the current member from St. Catharines, who was just speaking.

Speaker McLean quoted Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms on the matter of omnibus bills, which states: "Although there is no specific set of rules or guidelines governing the content of the bill, there should be a theme of relevancy amongst the contents of a bill. They must be relevant to and subject to the umbrella which is raised by the terminology of the long title of the bill." That's the problem with Bill 144 and almost every omnibus bill this government has introduced since I've been a member of this House.

For the first 25 years of omnibus legislation, governments respected the idea that omnibus bills must have a theme of relevancy amongst the contents of the bill. For the last 20 years, governments have relied on the second part of the rule out of sheer laziness to get away with cramming as many unrelated and unconnected amendments into one piece of legislation as they possibly can.

As with Bill 144, this leads to the government abusing House procedure for the purposes of limiting debate on controversial measures which it knows would be subject to greater resistance, particularly from government members, if debated separately. This is particularly true of

schedule 22 of the act, without which the government would not be able to follow through on its plan to privatize Hydro One.

Were that matter to be held separately, Speaker, or were government members ever compelled to vote on any matter related to the sale of Hydro One, they might actually have to act on the disagreement with their government that they so readily voice in private. We know there are a lot of members on the opposite side who don't agree with the sell-off of Hydro One, and given the opportunity to have that fulsome debate here in the Legislature, that may actually bear out in the votes and in the debate that we have.

The government may argue that the point of omnibus legislation is to save debating time and, on this, even parliamentary experts agree that that's a valuable objective—but only when the act in question addresses a single issue. It's unquestionably better for the House to have one vote on free trade or one vote on the National Energy Program than to have 24 votes on them. But, because the use of omnibus legislation is already a time-saving measure, the government should not then be able to enact time allocation on an omnibus bill—but that's what they're doing here. The only purpose for doing so, as has been done in the case of Bill 144, is to stifle debate and opposition here in the Legislature.

As has been previously stated, the original intent for omnibus bills was that amendments to different acts would be made under a common theme. In Bill 144, the amendments are made without a single common thread running through them. This is a bill that deals with, among other things, liquor licensing, the Hydro One sale, the debt retirement charge, illegal tobacco, escheats, business property taxes, horse racing and abolishing the Ontario Economic Forecast Council. No possible common theme could bind together so many different topics aside from the government's desire to not have each individual act and amendment debated separately in the House.

In his submission to Speaker McLean in 1995, the member for St. Catharines alleged that there was a point at which omnibus bills, such as Bill 144, might go too far and become unacceptable from a procedural standpoint. I ask the member: How is this not such a bill?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Do you want a reply?

Mr. Todd Smith: Question period is in an hour.

Its schedules and amendments have no common theme. In spite of the fact that it's entitled An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact or amend certain other statutes, two of its statutes—those pertaining to escheats and the Ontario Economic Forecast Council—are never mentioned in the speech that the finance minister gave to the House or the related budget documents.

I stand to accuse the government, and the Premier, of rank and unbelievable hypocrisy. They've spent the last few years railing against the use of omnibus legislation at the federal level and the destructive tone it sets for our politics. I submit to the House that this bill is no better in that regard than any which members opposite have previously opposed.

In his ruling to the House on December 5, 1995, Speaker McLean stated:

"However, omnibus legislation is accepted in many parliamentary jurisdictions in this country and it is something to which this assembly is no stranger. I share the concerns raised by many members here and caution that the use of omnibus legislation should be considered carefully and exercised judiciously. I also urge this House to break ground in this area and develop guidelines and policy as to the acceptable form and content of omnibus legislation."

This government has made no end of the use of the blunt instrument of omnibus legislation, and I don't anticipate that that's going to end any time soon. In fact, in spite of the rhetoric of the new federal government, I fully expect they will find the cudgel of omnibus legislation far too tempting, and they will probably employ it too, because it has strayed from its inherent purpose and it has become an insidious tactic. If a government is low on political capital but wishes to pass an unpopular piece of legislation, it can simply package that legislation with a more popular piece of legislation, which is in no way related, and then push it through.

The reality is that this bill is going to pass. However, I am going to vote against it because it would be an absolute affront to democracy to let it pass without loudly vocalizing the opposition to this tactic.

0920

The only way we can stop this from happening in the future is to write it into the practices of this House that, first, omnibus bills must be on a common theme. It's not enough simply to include every amended and introduced statute in the long title; it must deal with a single issue. Second, the use of time allocation on omnibus bills must be prohibited. You do not get to compound one time-limiting technique by using another, even more severe time-limiting technique. It has been 20 years—20 years—since Speakers of this Legislature first started expressing concern about the use of omnibus legislation.

There is a lot we could do to revive democracy, elevate discourse and celebrate divergence of opinion in this chamber, given the opportunity and taking the leadership, but it should start here. If the government will not, and I believe this government never will, surrender the cudgel, then it must be taken from them. If you want better laws, you need better debate; you need more ideas, not less. Omnibus bills such as Bill 144 only make for less debate. It's an affront to what we're sent here to do. It can be defined as nothing else and nothing less. For that reason, if for no other, this should be defeated.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Hon. Charles Sousa: I am pleased to stand today in the House for third reading of Bill 144, the Budget Measures Act, 2015.

This government has laid out a comprehensive plan to enhance greater prosperity for Ontarians, and the plan is working. Despite a challenging global trade environment, our economy continues to grow. Key indicators with re-

spect to our economy, such as real GDP per capita and employment, show the province continuous to advance. Ontario has recovered from the 2008-09 global recession. Lower oil prices, a more competitive Canadian dollar and solid US economic growth presents opportunities for further growth in Ontario. Private sector economists expect Ontario's growth to average 2.2% annually in 2016 through to 2018. In fact, more than 500,000 new jobs have been created since the recessionary low in 2009. The majority of these new jobs are full-time positions and in industries that pay above-average wages.

Furthermore, employment in Ontario is expected to continue to grow, increasing by 0.7% in 2015 and growing by 1.2% annually, on average, from 2016 to 2018. This has also improved Ontario's unemployment rate, which has improved steadily over the past six years and is now below the national average. Ontario's unemployment rate is expected to improve to 6.7% this year, down from 7.3% in 2014. It is projected to improve further in 2016, reaching 6.3% in 2017 and 2018.

This is further evidence of the fact that the function of business growth that we've tried to inspire is to build more consumer confidence. People, businesses and investors outside of Ontario are also taking notice. For the second year in a row, fDi Intelligence named Ontario as the number one destination in North America for global foreign direct investment. Our efforts to stimulate growth and promote greater infrastructure investment, as well as making Ontario more competitive and more prosperous, is building more confidence as well—confidence that our plan is working.

The Budget Measures Act, 2015 continues this plan. It fulfills several commitments we made in the 2015 Ontario budget. If passed, this act would help us implement our plan to build Ontario up: by helping Ontario businesses succeed so they can create rewarding, high-paying jobs that contribute to our province's economic stability and prosperity; by continuing to make the largest investment in public infrastructure in Ontario's history, with more than \$134 billion over 10 years in priorities such as roads, bridges, public transit, hospitals and schools; by investing in tomorrow's workforce, from the early years through to post-secondary education, to help our people build their talents to get the education and skills required to flourish in the evolving global economy. We are creating greater prosperity by building a fair society so that all Ontarians can reach their full potential and participate in the economy; and, by strengthening retirement security to help Ontarians maintain their standard of living in retirement.

If passed, this act would help build a stronger economy and, more importantly, enable Ontarians to prosper and succeed. That's why I ask for the support of this House in passing the Budget Measures Act, 2015.

To further expand on how this bill will help the people of Ontario, I also refer to my parliamentary assistant, Laura Albanese, who will say a few words during her turn.

Again, I ask this House to consider the requirements of furthering our economy and injecting more investment, enabling us to be more competitive in the long term. That is why we must pass this Budget Measures Act.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I, too, want to speak about this omnibus bill, and just to give you a bit of an idea why we call it that.

First of all, it was a bit of a surprise to see this finance bill. You'll see as I go through my 20 minutes where we reveal the real reason why this bill is here.

Just to read some of the schedules will give you an idea of how wide-reaching, varied and unrelated these topics are. This deals with the Assessment Act, the City of Toronto Act, the Electricity Act, government advertising—of course, we've heard from the Auditor General how terrible this has turned out—forfeited property, liquor control, labour relations, OLG, pension benefits, the Trillium Trust, tobacco and taxation. The list goes on and on and on—23 unrelated schedules. That's why we call it an omnibus bill; it's packaged together.

When I'm through with my 20 minutes, I think the people of Ontario will have a pretty good idea of what this entire bill is all about. All 167 pages of it are really to overshadow one sentence on page 162, which I'll talk about in a little bit.

I'm going to talk about burning the furniture to heat the house. We've heard that expression before. It's the title of my newest Fedeli Focus on Finance newsletter—Minister, I know you're going to enjoy it.

If you've read previous editions of Focus on Finance, then you would be well aware that we've been warning that the government's aim in selling off Hydro One and other assets was never, ever, to pay for transit and infrastructure, as they continue to suggest, but, rather to make their massive deficit look smaller. The fall economic statement, introduced 11 days late according to province's own fiscal accountability legislation, provided irrefutable proof that the government is doing exactly that: They are taking the revenue from asset sales to make up for their ineptness and mismanagement of the finances of the province of Ontario.

Despite the minister saying that we've recovered from recession, we still have a massive deficit. They say it's \$7.5 billion; we show that it's \$9.5 billion—their own documents show that it's actually \$9.5 billion. So we haven't recovered from recession. We're the province—the former engine of Confederation—that's now the have-not province and the province that still has our hand out looking for money from the federal government because the Liberals have mismanaged the finances of the people of Ontario.

0930

The government is claiming that they will reduce the deficit in 2015-16 from \$8.5 billion to \$7.5 billion, but they only achieve this number by booking the proceeds from the sale of Hydro One as revenue. This is proved by

the quote on page 100 of their own fall economic statement, which reads, “This increase” in revenue “largely reflects the government’s progress on its asset optimization strategy”—that’s the nice way of saying, “We sold off Hydro One”—“related to the recent Hydro One initial public offering (IPO)....”

On page 101, the government breaks down the \$1.25 billion in revenue. They have \$155 million coming from traditional taxes and \$1.09 billion coming from the sale of Hydro One. That’s in their own document. They booked the sale of Hydro One as revenue, which artificially lowers the deficit, because tomorrow, when they take it out, now we have a \$9.5-billion deficit and one heck of a hole in their budget.

In the next few minutes, I’m going to expose the clear and deliberate plan the government implemented to facilitate the sale of Hydro One and put that revenue toward reducing the debt.

It was a long and convoluted plan that was implemented over a full year, all to achieve that one goal. I’m going to talk about how we tie in the government’s 2015 budget; their surprise finance bill, Bill 144, which we’re talking about today; and their fall economic statement. All of those three pieces come together to tell us why there’s one sentence in this that we need to pay attention to. The whole book was written for that one sentence.

It started with the Premier standing under that massive banner that read, in big capital letters—and she was dwarfed by this banner, it was so large—“Beer in Grocery Stores,” and there’s where she stood to announce the sale of Hydro One, of course.

Days after the 2015 budget, we received a binder with 45 schedules, and it was there we learned that all oversight for Hydro One was going to be eliminated: no further access to freedom of information; the Auditor General; the Financial Accountability Officer; and several other officers—the Ombudsman and so on. This was designed to make it virtually impossible for anyone to get accurate information on the details of the Hydro One sale. That’s how it starts.

The first piece of the puzzle was the development of the Trillium Trust. In the 2014 budget, the government established the trust, ostensibly to hold the funds from the sale of assets. But the bill actually states they “may” put a portion of the proceeds into the trust. We tried here to close that loophole, to make them put: “All of the proceeds must be put in the trust.” But the Liberal government voted against those amendments, because we know what their agenda is now. We suspected it back then, but now we know what it is.

This was the first step necessary for putting the asset proceeds straight into revenue and never into infrastructure, as claimed.

The next piece is exposed when you compare the 2014 and the 2015 budgets. Both budgets announced the \$130-billion infrastructure expenditure, but in the 2014 version, the original version, only \$3.1 billion over four years was necessary from asset sales, and that includes \$1.1 billion from the sale of the GM shares—that was year one—then

a billion in the next year, a billion in the year after, and half a billion the following year. I’m sorry: It was a billion dollars, and then half a billion and half a billion. That’s the \$3.1 billion—no mention of Hydro One. The Hydro One money was not necessary to make the \$130-billion infrastructure plan.

But then the 2015 budget came along, and it painted a different picture. It had the exact same \$130 billion, the same expenditures, except now, all of a sudden, it needed the Hydro One money, somehow, to make it fly.

Well, we know it was not necessary. The original \$130-billion budget already had the expenditures accounted for, and the revenue accounted for. Now we know that this money really was excess—extra money—and now, of course, it was the most obvious indicator of the government’s true intentions. They would, in essence, put the proceeds of the sale of Hydro One into transit but take the already budgeted money for transit out and use that, I would say in a nice way, to lower the deficit. If I really wanted to say what I meant, it would be to make up for their incompetence, their ineptness, and their mismanagement of money over the last several years.

That brings us to the final piece required, swapping out the money, and here’s where this bill comes in. One day, absolutely without notice, this government puts forward Bill 144. It’s a 167-page finance bill. It has all kinds of issues that I mentioned earlier: horse racing, where they eliminate the Ontario Racing Commission after its long and storied history; they’re into tobacco, the Toronto act—all of these other things. But, really, it was all about this one sentence that was buried on page 162. It’s schedule 22, section 7, item number 1. It’s all about authorizing expenditures of the proceeds of the asset sales. It says: “to reimburse the crown”—to reimburse the crown—for expenditures “relating to the construction or acquisition of infrastructure.”

That’s where you go, “Aha.” We’ve known all along—we’ve known and we’ve said it for more than a year now—that that entire sale was nothing more than a facade to facilitate the lowering of the deficit, as I said earlier, basically to mask the incompetence, the ineptness and the mismanagement of taxpayer funds over the last decade. That single sentence, “To reimburse the crown,” is why this entire bill was created. There is no other reason. It’s buried on page 162; one sentence—one word: “reimburse.” That’s what it’s all about. There is almost nothing more to add. They’ve been outed. They’ve been exposed. We now know the combination of the fall economic statement, their budget bill and the 2015 budget; they paint the picture. We now know what it’s all about.

But everybody knows also that this doesn’t balance the budget. It just falsely inflates the revenue; that’s all it’s doing. That’s why we say it’s burning the furniture to heat the home. It doesn’t tackle their core problem. It doesn’t tackle the systemic operating deficit that they have created. What happens when you run out of things to sell? We know that what’s next will be the LCBO warehouse, the OPG tower across the street, the lake lands property and other properties. Eventually, we’re

going to run out of things to sell, but we still have the spending that they haven't tackled. That's where we're going to have this \$8-billion hole in the budget, which the Financial Accountability Officer revealed to all people interested in Ontario.

Before the fall economic statement, the Financial Accountability Officer came out with his fiscal outlook for Ontario. He concludes that there's a substantial risk that Ontario will not balance the province's books by 2017-18. In fact, he stated that if the current revenue and spending patterns continue, we can expect that year's deficit to reach \$3.5 billion—not to balance—and if spending grows to 3%, he expects the deficit to hit \$7.4 billion. Either way, it's not a balance.

Here is a quote from the Waterloo Record—their editorial of November 28: “So overly optimistic were finance minister Charles Sousa’s predictions this week in his fall economic statement, they belonged at Canada’s Wonderland, not Queen’s Park. They’re products of some fantasy world, a kingdom of plastic mountains and mechanical unicorns where every wish, however ridiculous, comes true for a while. The trouble is, when you leave, you’re back in the real world.”

Well, welcome back to the real world. That's where we are today—never mind the unicorns and the fantasy. The number one concern of the Financial Accountability Officer was that the government had overestimated their revenue projections, thereby making it nearly impossible to balance the budget by 2017-18.

The FAO actually estimated the gross domestic product to only grow by 3%, instead of the 2015 budget projection of 4.3%. The government's own fall economic statement confirmed the FAO's suspicions: On page 95, the government reveals that GDP will only grow by 2.9%—right in line with the FAO—but here is where the problem is: The FAO said that it shouldn't be 4.3%; it should be 3%, and that's going to reduce your revenue. Well, they did lower it—in fact, better than 3%—to 2.9%, but then they actually increased the revenue. So instead of falling from \$124 billion to \$123 billion, they actually fluffed it up to \$125.6 billion. Somehow, with less revenue, you get more revenue. I'm not sure how that works.

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The Financial Accountability Officer certainly doesn't understand how that works. But the FAO has always said that the budget was overstating revenue projections for each year. He encouraged the government to adjust their revenue projections to reflect the lack of future revenue. Instead of following the advice of the Financial Accountability Officer, the fall economic statement has revenue drastically increasing instead of decreasing.

The officer also stated that everything would have to go perfectly for the Liberals to achieve that balanced budget, but when you read the adjusted forecast for this year, it's the first indication that all is not perfect. We're still in this fantasy land. We see the \$8-billion hole in the budget that the FAO's office has given us. We have a difference of \$2.2 billion this year, \$2.1 billion next year

and, the year that they're to balance, we have a \$3.7-billion hole, which is an \$8-billion hole in the budget. This is from our Financial Accountability Officer, somebody whom we respect on this side of the House and whose numbers we actually do believe and actually do listen to.

The government has to have several scenarios: They can use \$8 billion of Hydro One proceeds to plug that revenue hole and artificially balance the budget; they can use the proceeds from Hydro One to spend on infrastructure, as they claim, although we know that's not where it's going, and leave an \$8-billion revenue gap; they can use the Hydro One proceeds to spend on some infrastructure and raise taxes to build the balance; or they can do a combination of all of those above. But, in essence, the government is going to have to break one or more of their promises—either the infrastructure spending or balance the budget—in order to fill the other, or, as we all suspect and we've seen historically, they will simply raise taxes. That's where we know that this government is most comfortable.

While the finance minister continues to insist in this Legislature that the government is controlling spending, the fall economic statement reveals that 19 ministries are projected to spend more than in the previous fiscal year.

When we look at all of that and then we jump to page 107 of the fall economic statement, we see what they're talking about in cap-and-trade. That's the next one. It's going to leave us cap in hand, and here's why: The Hydro One shell game isn't enough. It's not the only accounting trick the government is going to rely on to artificially present a balanced budget. On page 107, they revealed that they intend to use the proceeds from this cap-and-trade scheme to balance the budget.

This is a story from the National Post, November 27: “The document also reveals for the first time how much money the government hopes to raise from a new cap-and-trade scheme that will be phased in.... It expects to raise \$300 million next year and \$1.3 billion from the next.”

From their own—the Liberal government's—fall economic statement, page 107, they will take \$1.3 billion from the cap-and-trade and use that to pay for the mistakes that they've made in the past, their mismanagement, their ineptness and the hurt that they've caused the people of Ontario. They will mask it with this \$1.3-billion tax.

The minister, when he was here earlier—

Hon. Charles Sousa: He's here right now.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Yes—in his earlier speech, said, “The plan is working.”

Let me tell you: The economic statement has quietly reduced their expectations of job creation and growth, despite the continuing bravado from the minister and rhetoric to the contrary. Let's look at their own fall economic statement. He tells us that their plan is working. But in the 2015 budget, they had 78,000 new jobs; in the fall economic statement, their new document, they've lowered it to 46,000. Their own projections show us be-

ing down 32,000 jobs from just a few months ago when the budget came out. They also have a projection for employment to be down by 15,000 the year after, and more the following year as well.

The minister said that we've recovered from the global recession, but again they showed a \$9.5-billion deficit in the last fall economic statement, before their shell game, up from the \$8.5 billion that they projected. This tells us the real direction of the deficit. If it wasn't for using the one-time sale of the Hydro revenue to artificially support it, what do you do next year? Well, you've got some more sales. What do you do the year after? Some more sales. You have not fixed the systemic problem that we have.

While the minister continues to talk about all of these good things, let's just look at some other things that keep the rest of the people of Ontario up at night. Our debt to GDP is now over 40%. When the Liberal government took office, we were at a respectable 27%; today, 40%. The debt per person in Ontario: \$21,000. Interest on debt will rise to nearly \$13 billion by 2017-18. That will be almost 10% of the total government spending. And contrary to the government's claims, the fall economic statement shows federal transfer payments were actually up.

Everything that we present here are the facts from either the Financial Accountability Office or their own fall economic statement, yet we hear them day after day, week after week, month after month, standing here telling us a completely different story. I urge the government to read their own documents for a change, to listen to the Financial Accountability Office and to stop the mismanagement of the funds of the people of Ontario.

I thank you very much for allowing me this opportunity to expose the real truth behind the one sentence on page 162 that this whole book was intended to shield.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you for recognizing me, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to have the opportunity to stand today in the Ontario Legislative Assembly and speak about the Budget Measures Act, 2015.

First, I would like to thank the various stakeholders who spoke before the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. Their input was much appreciated. This government remains committed to consulting with all Ontarians on issues that matter to them.

If passed, this act would implement measures contained in the 2015 Ontario budget, enact five new statutes and amend other statutes. I would like to briefly touch on a few.

The Budget Measures Act, 2015 proposes to remove the debt retirement charge cost on April 1, 2018, for all non-residential consumers, to reduce their energy bills. This would be nine months earlier than previously estimated. A large industrial company using 3,000 megawatt hours per month would save \$21,000 per month, or about 7% on its electricity bills. A large northern industrial electricity consumer in the Northern Industrial Electricity

Rate Program would save more than 8% off its electricity bill. A small business using 20,000 kilowatt hours per month would save \$140 per month, or about 4% of its electricity bill. It would also provide certainty to commercial, industrial and other users to help them plan their investments more effectively.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the government is already removing the debt retirement charge cost from residential users' electricity bills as of January 1, 2016, saving a typical residential user about \$70 per year.

The Budget Measures Act, 2015, also proposes to make amendments to the Liquor Control Act. As you may be aware, Mr. Speaker, the government is introducing beer sales in Ontario grocery stores. This is the biggest change to beverage alcohol retailing in 90 years, since the end of Prohibition.

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Hon. Jeff Leal: Al Capone.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Al Capone, yes.

With the regulatory framework now in place, the LCBO has initiated a competitive bidding process for the first grocery store authorizations, with the first 60 grocery stores expected to be authorized to sell beer this December 2015; up to 150 grocery stores will be authorized by May 2017. In response to consumer demand, up to 450 grocery stores in Ontario could eventually be approved to sell beer.

We have made significant progress in modernizing beer retailing since the 2015 budget, including a pilot program to sell twelve-packs at 10 LCBO stores, free listings for Ontario brewers at the Beer Store, new on-site sales outlets for small brewers, and new craft beer zones planned for 25 LCBO locations across the province.

The amendments to the Liquor Control Act contained in the Budget Measures Act would further our progress on modernizing beer retailing in this province. Specifically, if passed, the amendments would support the implementation of beer sales in grocery stores; empower the LCBO to propose, revoke, suspend, renew and transfer store authorizations—this authority would be transferred to the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario by regulation; require that sales information related to individual authorized stores be kept confidential; and permit the LCBO to make payments to brewers and to collect corresponding amounts from grocery stores that sell beer. These are just a few of the amendments contained in the proposed act.

To sum up, the Budget Measures Act, 2015, continues our progress in implementing our government's plan to build Ontario up. That is why I ask the members of this assembly to support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to stand in my place and bring forward the concerns of the people of Kitchener-Waterloo.

I think it's really important that the context of where we are right now with this particular piece of legislation needs to be fully explained to those who are watching—and get it on the record.

Bill 144 is an omnibus piece of legislation. It contains 23 schedules. We have been time-allocated on Bill 144, both in this House and in committee. Yesterday—no, sorry, it was Monday. I don't know; we're almost done, Mr. Speaker. On Monday, we were given two hours in committee to do clause-by-clause—for those who are watching, this is the opposition's opportunity to address some of the weaknesses in this piece of legislation. The government gave us two hours to do that.

The reason why that's so concerning is—you'll remember, Mr. Speaker—that the Premier of this province said during the last election that the government was going to be more inclusive. "We're going to consult. We're going to listen. We're going to rule and lead from the activist centre."

I think that it's fair to say that at the time, nobody even knew what that meant. Clearly, we do know what that means now. The activist centre has a banker at the centre of it. He is using the Premier's office as a pulpit for privatization. In my mind, I have this picture of this emerald curtain just off of the Premier's office, and just like in the Wizard of Oz, there are levers and pulls, and he's saying, "No, you must sell Hydro One in order to fund infrastructure," which has to be one of the biggest—I don't know; it's like a puff of smoke, really, Mr. Speaker. You know what I mean? There are words that I could use that are fairly unparliamentary in that regard.

The false choice of selling off Hydro One in order to get infrastructure—I mean, they can't even sell it. The good news for us, I think, is that the people of this province aren't buying it. Whatever the Liberals are selling, the people of this province aren't buying. Over 80% of the people in this province understand that the sell-off of Hydro One and the carving off of that important public asset that generates revenue for the province's health care and for education—they understand, actually, the shell game that is happening here at Queen's Park. The other part of that is that at least the municipalities—almost 185 municipalities—have passed motions that have asked this government not to sell off that important asset.

I'm going to touch on a little piece about how Bill 144 actually negatively impacts municipalities and school boards. I would just love for this government to adopt this philosophy of, "Do no harm." I used to work in the social work department at Wilfrid Laurier, and that was one of the principles. Social workers enter into a relationship when they're trying to help people, and the principle is, "Don't double-down the harm; try not to do more harm."

If this government adopted that basic principle, perhaps they wouldn't move forward with Bill 144. One of the reasons—there are many reasons, and I'm going to talk a little bit about that—that we cannot support this piece of legislation is because it doubles down on this piece of legislation, which is the 2015 budget. In this budget, it became very clear that the government was moving aggressively and accelerating their plan, which is not a fiscally responsible plan, to continue privatization. The context in this regard is that the Financial Account-

ability Officer came out with his report—and the finance critic from the PC Party mentioned this—and he very clearly indicated that there is a tipping point here in the province of Ontario with the sell-off of Hydro One.

Yes, it's a quick cash grab right now; there's no doubt about it: \$1.1 billion. Bay Street was very excited to get a hold of 15% of Hydro One—do you want to know why? It's because it generates revenue, and shareholders want to make money. It goes against the entire principle of what a government should be doing and should be investing in to benefit the people of this province—a quick cash grab to make the books look good for this particular budget year and the next year.

In 2017-18, when the revenue loss that this province is going to experience because of the sell-off of Hydro One—that's when you will definitely see—you're going to have to cut program spending; the Financial Accountability Officer mentioned that. Revenue is going to have to come from someplace. Certainly, based on the latest Auditor General's report, we can tell you with great accuracy, because it's right in her report, that this government continues to grant money to businesses. Eighty per cent, the Auditor General said, of the money that went to businesses to generate economic development—there was a complete lack of transparency in that regard, and the total was \$1.45 billion.

If this government continues down that road, by giving money to corporations with some tenuous connections to the Liberal Party, it does lend itself to wonder: If we are going to sell off Hydro One and if we're going to continue with this economic strategy—which has proven to be a complete and utter failure—we are going to be in a position as a province where we're going to have a serious revenue issue. We actually have it right now. We also have a serious waste issue, with the lack of fiscal responsibility and due diligence on the part of this government as they award contracts and procure services on behalf of the people of this province. No business could possibly run like this.

The reason that I care so much about that, and the reason that we as New Democrats care so much about that, is that when you are so incompetent from a financial perspective, on the economic file, the people pay the price from a social service perspective. That's the connection, and for some reason this government has not acknowledged. It refuses to address some systemic issues around due diligence and around, quite honestly, very progressive accounting principles: that you follow up on contracts. When you award money to companies and you say, "Here's \$1.1 million for your company," then you go back to that company and you say, "Did it make a difference? Were jobs created? Did it have a positive impact on the local economy? Is it sustainable? Was it worth investing in?" This government doesn't seem that interested in that at all.

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So the Hydro One sell-off is going to have long-term consequences for this province; there's no doubt about it. The Financial Accountability Officer—and this is the line

that I actually want to make sure that people do understand. The FAO has said that we will have a revenue issue in this province as soon as the quick cash grab from the sell-off of Hydro One reaches its peak, which, as I said, is around 2017. Once that happens, then this government is going to either have to cut program spending or find revenue elsewhere.

The government in their fall economic statement said, "You know what? If revenue doesn't come into this province, then we're going to actually have to look at some other asset sales. We're going to have to continue to privatize services." So the sell-off of future assets is definitely on this government's agenda. If we can learn from past practices—they always talk about the 407 as it relates to the PC party, and that was a complete debacle. At least this party has acknowledged, though, that going forward, there is a consequence for the actions. At least they have acknowledged it.

This government, though, has just repackaged it. How many other ways can you say "privatization"? You can say, "We're broadening the ownership. We're expanding the stakeholders."

Interjection: Optimizing.

Ms. Catherine Fife: "We're optimizing. We're modernizing." I think they've invested in some thesaurus stocks. They pull out every single definition for "broadening the ownership." The truth of the matter is that up until four weeks ago, when this government moved down that road, the ownership could not be more broad than the entire province of Ontario. Every citizen had an investment in Hydro One, and that investment actually was paying off.

As the Premier flies away again to Paris to talk about greenhouse gases—which is somewhat ironic, I have to say—conservation should be one of the major agenda items that this government should be focusing on. Hydro One, when it's a publicly owned company, has a definite—they're motivated to focus on conservation, because, of course, that is a smart investment, and it's the call from the people of the province: that conservation needs to be a focus.

When the shareholders take over, as they will—because the legislation does not protect against collusion, because there is no law that actually would prevent collusion in this instance. Shareholders, once they reach that 60%, which is a majority—I would like for this government to at least finally acknowledge that. Once they reach that 60%, there is nothing stopping them from going for full ownership. The only thing the legislation protects against is that the government must hold 10%.

This does lend itself to a serious trust and confidence issue in this government. After Building Ontario Up came out, the 2015 budget—we did not support this budget because, of course, it formalized the sell-off of Hydro One, which is such a short-sighted, duplicitous move on the part of the government. But, after this, an editorial came out—and this was from Bob Kinnear, the president of the Amalgamated Transit Union here in Toronto. He says, "I fear that public trust in government will be so eroded by the time our grandchildren are grown up that

nobody will remember a time when the train actually ran on time—a time, already past, when government had the courage to invest directly in building a better future for all Ontarians."

What I have said, actually, when the fall economic statement came out as it relates to Bill 144, is that this government has completely opened the door to privatization. They have created the crisis. They are going to capitalize on the crisis. There are certain parties in this province that are going to benefit, but it is not the people that we are elected to serve. That is the erosion of trust that we see in this province.

The Financial Accountability Officer has—thank goodness we have him, because, really, the true fall economic statement was delivered by the FAO ahead of the Minister of Finance.

As it relates to Bill 144, I just want to touch—because it was time-allocated; because this government, which is so open and so transparent and so inclusive, decided to limit debate on democracy, I only had an opportunity in committee to really address schedule 9, first of all.

Schedule 9, you'll remember, Mr. Speaker, has to do with the Horse Racing Licence Act. I hope all of us remember this, although it seems very clear that some of the newer MPPs are not familiar with the state of crisis that this government put the entire horse racing industry in. When we did consult—because there was no consultation whatsoever on schedule 9, Mr. Speaker—at the very least, I was able to raise the issue of how much more damage this government is doing to the horse racing industry. I know they don't like to hear about it, but I really don't care, because my job is to bring forward the voices of the stakeholders to this place, to the floor of this Legislature. In particular, horse racing used to be under the Ontario Racing Commission, and now it's going to be under alcohol and gaming.

We did fight—both the PCs and ourselves—to make sure that those voices were heard. Every amendment that we put forward—and these are basic principles of democracy. We asked the government to follow through on their promise and establish a successor to the Horse Racing Partnership Funding Program, which they refused to do. We also fought to at least grandfather the relationships and the contracts that are currently existing. The government refused to do that as well.

They're not on the side of consistency. They're not on the side of honouring their agreements with the horse people across this province.

We also fought to get the agreements entered by the Ontario Racing Commission to be considered as successors to the old Horse Racing Partnership Funding Program, for at least some continuity. It seemed to be fair.

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: What's going to happen is that you're going to have to renegotiate those contracts, and because the horse people do not trust this government, they know that they're going to lose—unless you want to bring that collective agreement right here to the floor of the Legislature, like you're doing with EllisDon.

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Well, this government is—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It appears that we've got an ongoing conversation without including me. I really feel left out. The minister will cut it back a bit. Thank you.

Continue.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you. I didn't want to leave you out of the conversation, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I've been addressing you the entire time, because that's just the kind of person I am.

I didn't get to schedule 14 of Bill 144. This has to do with selling beer in grocery stores. Like, "Look over here: We've got beer. Don't look over there: We're selling the province from under your feet."

We New Democrats obviously believe that the government and the LCBO have already laid the groundwork. We do believe that the best means of selling alcohol is through LCBO kiosks in existing grocery and retail stores. This model has been working. I see the Liberals tinkering around the edges on a regular basis, around alcohol, and I genuinely do feel, and I think that most people understand, that this is primarily a diversion.

With respect to schedule 14, it states that nobody outside of government can independently verify whether grocers are paying what they owe to the people of Ontario, should they exceed their share of the global sales cap of \$450 million. So the government has made it so that the sales information for each cannot even being FOIed. Once again, this promise, this illusion, of transparency and accountability: They have ingrained it in Bill 144 to actually work against transparency and accountability.

That was schedule 14. I didn't get a chance to get to this piece, because, of course, the government had time-allocated.

Schedule 12 of Bill 144: This is the rebirth of the EllisDon bill, if you will. We opposed Bill 74 when it first came to the floor of this Legislature, and we still oppose schedule 12. Even the Premier at the time voted against Bill 74, yet here it is, buried in Bill 144. Isn't that interesting, Mr. Speaker? As the Premier of this province, she voted against it, and then her government, when they have a majority, they bury it in an omnibus bill. Of course it's going to pass, because they have a majority. They couldn't get the job done in a minority and they didn't want to look like they wanted to support collective bargaining on the floor of the Legislature, but they're perfectly happy to do that in a majority setting. I think it's really important to note that this piece of legislation runs contrary to labour relations of Ontario.

The other piece that I was able to address in committee, which I know the government really appreciated, was voting against schedule 3. I'll end on the Electricity Act because what is happening on the energy file today in the province of Ontario has to be—when this government ran, they said they were going to be open and transparent and they said they were going to be more consulting and more inclusive. With what's happening on the energy file right now in the province of Ontario, we are going to be

paying the price for these decisions—our grandchildren, and our children for sure. The Electricity Act right now, it has to be said, is heavily flawed and will not, of course, be supported by New Democrats because it is such a colossal mess-up. The government has repeatedly prolonged the life of the residual stranded debt—and I asked this question of the finance minister in the House just last week. Prolonging the life of the residual stranded debt—and ratepayers have already paid the price for this, and that's the frustrating part. Now, because of the Hydro One sell-off, the government has increased the residual stranded debt yet again. Businesses will be stuck paying the \$600 million a year in debt retirement charges for even longer.

The spin on this file—they deserve an Academy Award for it, Mr. Speaker. The government has defied the recommendations of the Auditor General and has now eliminated all transparency and accountability provisions with respect to the OEFC and the residual stranded debt and no longer has to show that the debt retirement charge is actually paying down the debt. There's that civil rights statement: "What we have here is a failure to communicate." It is not a failure to communicate. The conversation on electricity is going to be ongoing. But the bigger picture here is that this government has created a crisis in the electricity file to make the case for further privatization. You can connect the dots easily. In fact, the Auditor General has done that in the last two reports she has delivered to the province.

Finally, because I want to tie it back to municipalities, which, as I mentioned, have passed over 180 motions asking the government not to sell Hydro One, the government is going to be making municipalities pay a price for the loss of Hydro One revenues by changing the law and permanently claiming money that would have started flowing to municipalities and schools after the residual stranded debt was retired. This is exactly what municipalities were worried about. Based on the last AMO meeting—the AMO AGM, if you will—where this government showed up and says, "We respect you as municipalities," continuing and moving forward with the sell-off of Hydro One is essentially a slap in the face to municipalities. Those locally elected governments are going to be paying the price for the loss of revenue through the sale of Hydro One for years to come.

Bill 144 is unsupportable. We will not be voting for it. It's a double-down on the 2015 budget, which opened the door for continued further fiscal mismanagement of this government, Mr. Speaker. As New Democrats, we cannot support the sell-off of public assets which actually generate revenue. It runs counter to everything we believe in, and we know that the people who are going to pay the price going forward are Ontarians.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being close to 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Todd Smith: J'ai l'honneur de présenter trois invités spéciaux francophones qui sont avec nous aujourd'hui. Chacun est un représentant de l'Alliance française de Toronto. Nous avons M^{me} Patricia Guérin, directrice culturelle; Christophe Plantiveau, principal du campus de Spadina et coordinateur marketing; et Thierry Lasserre, directeur général. Bienvenue à Queen's Park, chers amis de l'Alliance française de Toronto.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'm delighted to introduce John Gallo to the House. Mr. Gallo is from my riding and a former town councillor with Aurora.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to introduce, in the members' west gallery, Mr. Dave Meade and Mr. Doug Sellars from the Association of Major Power Consumers in Ontario. They're here on a lobby day today and they're having a reception in the dining room tonight.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I want to welcome my constituency staff, who are joining me here at Queen's Park today. We have Holli-Lynne Elash, Carly Greco, and a master of social work student and co-op student who's been helping me greatly, Mollie Witenoff from Waterloo.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I do have some guests in the members' east gallery who are visiting here today: Alexandra Borowik, Anisya Borowik, Peter Burges and Hannah Burges. And there are some other folks that I will talk about later on.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to introduce probably the best constituency staff in not only Ontario but Canada. I have Trish Fifield, Marlene Bainbridge and Whitney McWilliam here from St. Thomas.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's my pleasure to introduce Crystal E. Cummings in the Speaker's gallery watching question period today.

Mr. Han Dong: Today in Queen's Park, I welcome 34 students from the Clinton Street public school. They will be performing at the grand staircase after question period, and I welcome all members to drop by, say hello and enjoy.

I would also like to introduce a constituent, Caleb Woolcott. He is with us in the gallery today.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'm very honoured today to have two guests from my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex: Brian Verheyen and Lynn Verheyen. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I would like to introduce, in the gallery, a fellow northerner: Paolo Dottori from Tembec.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park today my executive assistant, Michelle Roe, from Sarnia-Lambton.

Mr. Todd Smith: There's a rather historic couple who are visiting with me here this morning at Queen's Park: husband and wife, both councillors in the town of Bancroft, so you can imagine what those meetings are like. I'd like to welcome Tracy and Barry McGibbon to the Legislature today.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'd like to introduce my co-op student, Mitra, from Thornhill, and Ben, who's helping us over from U of T. Welcome to question period.

Ms. Catherine Fife: On behalf of our deputy leader, who's stuck in traffic, today we are privileged to have a number of community advocates from the new federal riding of University-Rosedale: Caleb Woolcott; Jed Sears; Kieran, Alastair and Amanda Kreidié-Akazaki; Octavie Bellavance; Kim McCrory; Molly Sung; and Nadine Tkatchevskaia. Welcome.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: It's my pleasure to welcome members from the Association of Major Power Consumers in Ontario, or AMPCO, who have joined us at Queen's Park today. I would particularly like to welcome Adam White, president of AMPCO, and Mark Passi, chair of AMPCO.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Today our page Benjamin Shoalts has a lot of family here. His mother is here, Kerry Shoalts; his aunt, Nancy Gazo; another aunt, Ann Dilts; and another aunt, Lisa Welfred; his cousin, Gill Dilts; and his cousin, Kate Welfred. Welcome to Queen's Park.

ANNUAL REPORT, PROVINCIAL ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table the 2014-15 annual report of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Would the members please join me in welcoming the family of the late Howard Nicholas Sheppard, MPP for Northumberland during the 32nd and 33rd Parliaments, who are seated in the Speaker's gallery: his widow, Bernice Sheppard; daughters and son, Elaine, Eileen and Bruce Sheppard; and grandson and wife, Brandon and Kimberly Sheppard. Brandon served as a legislative page in 1989. Welcome. Thank you for providing me with this opportunity.

I would also like to welcome, in the Speaker's gallery, from the 30th, 31st, 33rd, 35th Parliaments, and Speaker of the 35th Parliament, from Scarborough-Ellesmere, David Warner. Welcome, David.

From Scarborough East, from the 36th and 37th Parliaments, Steve Gilchrist: Steve is the present president of the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians. Thank you for taking the reins, Steve.

And also, with as many ridings as I would not want to take, but it does say "Carleton" in every one of the ridings: from the 31st to the 39th Parliaments, Norm Sterling.

HOWARD SHEPPARD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'd like to recognize the government House leader for a point of order.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I believe that you will find that we have unanimous consent to pay tribute to Howard Nicholas Sheppard, former member for Northumberland, with a representative from each caucus speaking for up to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent. Do we agree? Agreed.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will recognize the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's an honour to rise in the House today and pay tribute to Mr. Howard Nicholas Sheppard, a former member who represented the riding of Northumberland from 1981 to 1987. I would like to welcome his wife, Bernice, and their family and friends to the chamber this morning.

Unfortunately, no one in our caucus served with or personally knew Mr. Sheppard, but after some research, I asked if I could make the remarks on behalf of the NDP.

The Sheppard family had a dairy farm for almost 30 years. Among his many volunteer roles, Howard was a past chairman of the Northumberland County Milk Committee, as I was for the Timiskaming Milk Committee. One of the strengths of this Legislature is that members come from a wide variety of backgrounds, and I'm sure that Howard's vocation as a dairy farmer and his involvement in the Ontario Milk Marketing Board helped shape his contribution to this Legislature.

Farmers tend to be proud people but very humble, and I am confident that Howard was cut from that cloth. We have Mother Nature as a partner, and she can be bountiful, but she can also turn cruel very quickly. There are times as a farmer when there is nothing more that can be done to control your destiny. Howard would have experienced that, and it would have helped him in the times when the same thing happens in public life.

Farmers learn to deal with the unexpected, whether it be a calving gone wrong or an equipment breakdown. This ability to deal with crises would have served Howard and his constituents well in his various roles.

1040

Howard not only served in this Legislature; he served as a councillor of Alnwick township from 1978 to 1980, as reeve from 1994 to 2000, and as warden of the county in 1996-97. He served on four different school boards between the 1950s and the 1970s. He served as a director of Hamilton Township Mutual Insurance from 1989 to 2007. His community involvement of more than 40 years included memberships in the Rotary, the Royal Canadian Legion, the Shriners, and as a past master of Percy Lodge.

Dairy farms are operated by families, and I'm sure that Howard's family had to pitch in more than their fair share for him to be able to put in so much time working for the community. For that, we owe his wife, Bernice, and their children a deep debt of gratitude. Even with their help, I'm sure that Howard put in many late nights and/or early mornings fixing things that just didn't get done while he was away.

Farm folk tend to speak plainly, with a lack of pretence or filter. Their leaders reflect that, and Howard Sheppard said what he thought needed to be said on behalf of his constituents. According to some accounts, it got him into hot water on occasion. But what might be perceived as a flaw in this environment would have been much appreciated as strength of character and conviction to those he represented.

In his free time—and where he found it, I don't know—he enjoyed hunting and the occasional cigar at hunt camp.

In closing, it's been an honour to be able to help pay tribute to Howard Sheppard, a man who loved his family, his farm and public service. Although I never got the chance to meet him, I will think of him often as I read his name, which is carved on each side of the door to the Amethyst Room.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Speaker, indeed it is a privilege for me to stand in this Legislature today to pay tribute to the late Howard Sheppard, a man who was said by many to exemplify service to the people in Northumberland county.

I would like to thank his family—wife Bernice; daughters Elaine and Eileen; son Bruce; and grandson Brandon and his partner Kimberly—for being here today and for their service to the people in Northumberland by supporting and encouraging Howard in his public service. Although not often recognized, it's the families of politicians who give up their time and sacrifice so much to allow their loved ones the opportunity to serve, and we thank you for that.

Speaker, I want to share a little bit of the history of Mr. Howard Sheppard, and from now on I'm going to refer to him as Howard, because that's how the people of Roseneath and Northumberland used to know him. He was born on October 6, 1933, in the metropolis of Codrington, which is part of the municipality of Brighton—the subways are still arriving there.

Hon. Mario Sergio: Always on time.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Always on time.

Howard was a student at Campbellford District High School. He spent his early days working on the farm.

Howard belonged to numerous farm organizations in Northumberland, including the federation of agriculture, junior farmers, hog producers, and the soil and crop improvement association. He operated a dairy farm near Roseneath for almost 30 years and was a member of the Ontario Milk Marketing Board for 15 years, during which time he chaired the Pine Ridge planning authority.

Howard served as vice-president and president of the Roseneath Agricultural Society. In 2011, he received recognition for his contributions to the local agricultural industry when he was inducted to the Quinte Agricultural Wall of Fame. Howard was nominated by Hamilton Township Mutual Insurance, where he served as a director from 1989 to 2007.

His public service began in the mid-1950s when he served 16 years on four different school boards, beginning with the North Brighton Township School Board in

1957 and including chairmanship of the Northumberland and Newcastle school board from 1974 to 1976.

Howard first entered provincial politics in the 1981 general election, defeating popular Port Hope mayor William Wyatt to represent the riding of Northumberland at Queen's Park. He served as a distinguished member of this Legislature in the 32nd and 33rd Parliaments, sitting on and chairing many legislative committees and serving as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Tourism and Recreation in the Bill Davis and Frank Miller governments.

This is when I first got to meet Howard, after he became an MPP. As the family will know, we have a family business that needed some help at that time with some issues. The first time I called Howard, within—I'm not going to say within minutes, but within maybe hours, it was resolved. I've always remembered that.

Following his years at Queen's Park, Mr.—Howard. My notes say "Mr. Sheppard"; I'm trying to get away from that. Howard served as reeve of the township of Alnwick from 1994 to 2000. It was here that I had the brief opportunity and privilege to work with Howard as we both sat on Northumberland county council. He filled the role as warden from 1996 to 1997.

I remember Howard working tirelessly for his municipality, always wanting what was best for the public, bringing their issues to the forefront and advocating for the folks in the rural community. His community involvement of more than 40 years included active roles in Rotary, the Royal Canadian Legion and the Shriners, and he was a past master of Percy Lodge.

In 2001, then-Premier Mike Harris appointed Howard to the board of health for the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit. If I remember correctly, I think we served together there for a little while as well.

I'm reminded of a quote from, of all people, Arnold Schwarzenegger that says, "Help others and give something back. I guarantee you will discover that while public service improves the lives and the world around you, its greatest reward is the enrichment and new meaning it will bring your own life." That was Howard.

Mr. Speaker, I think this echoes Howard's legacy and the contribution he made to the Legislature, Northumberland county and the province of Ontario. He has re-defined the term "public servant."

Thank you very much, and thank you to the family for being here today in his honour.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further tribute.

Mr. Todd Smith: I am also pleased to be able to stand today to honour Mr. Howard Sheppard. Unfortunately, I didn't have the opportunity to get to know Howard Sheppard, but, as the member from the NDP indicated, it's a remarkable thing to see his name etched on the walls downstairs outside the Amethyst Room. I think that means a lot to the family, who, as has been mentioned, made a lot of sacrifices themselves so that Shep, as he was known here at Queen's Park, could serve at the Legislature.

As the current member for Prince Edward-Hastings, which is a neighbouring riding to Northumberland, I'm often reminded that the work I do in this House is only possible because of the work of those who have come before us and the service they have offered to the province of Ontario, our predecessors, and how they have paved the way for us to be here.

I'd like to recognize Howard Sheppard and recognize his family that's in attendance here today. As has been noted, his wife, Bernice, is here. His son Bruce has come all the way from Winchester, Virginia, for this event. His two daughters, Elaine and Eileen, didn't come quite as far; they're from Port Hope and north of Cobourg, but we're pleased they are here as well. And Brandon and his wife, Kimberly—that would be his grandson, Brandon. Brandon is here. Unfortunately, Howard's other son, Allen, who is the deputy fire chief in Alnwick/Haldimand, was supposed to be here today as well, but there was a big fire there and so Allen was out all night providing a public service to his community, as his dad, Howard, did for many, many years.

1050

Born in the metropolis of Codrington, as was mentioned by my colleague from Northumberland—Quite-West—and it's kind of funny to note, as I was looking back in Hansard to see some of the things that Mr. Sheppard had talked about here in the Legislature, that there was an Ontario map that came out in 1986. He made a point in the Legislature of noting that Codrington wasn't in the right place on the map. As he indicated, not many people live in Codrington, but for the family members of those who live in Codrington, it's pretty important that they go to the right place. He was pretty concerned about the fact that Codrington was quite a ways away from where it was supposed to be on that map. I think he managed to get it corrected.

Howard, or Shep, as he was known to his friends, was a committed community member and a public servant long before he arrived here at Queen's Park. Serving on Northumberland county council and working as a school trustee for 16 years on four different school boards, as was noted, Howard brought his fierce sense of Northumberland pride, and he understood the term "service" before ever stepping onto the floor of this Legislature.

When he was elected to Queen's Park in 1981, Howard worked tirelessly over six years to serve his constituents and be their voice in this Legislature. Through his questions in question period—he worked on private members' bills as well, of course—and in his work in committee, he was always a voice for Northumberland and its biggest advocate, and Northumberland's proudest representative.

He was always advocating for rural Ontario here in Toronto. Looking over some of the member's statements that he had done during his six years here at Queen's Park, he was talking about insurance rates, roads, bridges and infrastructure, nursing home beds—sound familiar?—improvements in agriculture, drivers' tests—really local things. It's amazing, sometimes, how time really doesn't move on all that much, in spite of the fact that it does.

In 1987, Howard returned home to Northumberland. He didn't stop being an active community member. As Karl Bernhardt, a riding association member who knew Shep well, stated, "The evidence of" his commitment "to service is, after his years in Toronto ended, Howard was back and served again in municipal politics as well as in service organizations...."

My friend here from Haldimand-Norfolk, Toby Barrett, knew him well through his work with Mutual insurance.

He was also speaking with Rob Milligan.

The former member for Northumberland, as has been mentioned, was very active in the Percy Masons lodge and was also a past district representative for the Peterborough district for the Masons as well. So he was very active in that community, and very active with the milk board, as has been mentioned, and numerous other organizations in the community.

None of Howard's work here or in Northumberland would have been possible, had it not been for the love and support of his family. As a husband and the father of two young girls myself, I know that all our work is an extension of our families at home. I'd like to thank Howard's family for lending him to Queen's Park for the six years that he served here.

His two grandsons—two of them, anyway; Bruce's kids—Brandon, who is here, and Tyler-Blair, worked as pages while Grandpa was here as an MPP. They got to see his hard work up close. I know that all of his children and grandchildren inherited his deep love for community and his notion of public service as well.

I also know that family was one of the most important things for Howard, and he made sure to share his love of sports and hunting with his children and grandchildren. One thing that Howard couldn't accept, however, was how tall his grandkids were getting, especially one who was a football player at college down in the United States. He was apparently 6 foot 4; Layne is his name. When they took a picture, out hunting, they would always make Layne stand in a hole so that he didn't appear so much taller than his grandpa.

Before I finish my remarks today, I'd like to share one more story about Howard that's the perfect example of his amiable and easy nature.

Many years ago, Howard was attending his fundraiser golf tournament with his fellow caucus mate Norm Sterling, who happens to be here today. Norm's wife, Joan, was also playing in the golf tournament. I don't know if Joan is a better golfer than Norm or not, but Joan did happen to win closest-to-the-pin at this golf tournament, and her prize for winning was a case of tractor motor oil.

As has been mentioned, Howard was a farmer, and when Joan won the case of tractor oil, she gave it to Howard. Apparently, it was as if Howard had won the lottery. When he received the prize, his face lit up and it's been described to me as the face a skunk would have while he was eating onions. That's how it was described to me. He was that happy about getting this.

Those are the stories and just a glimpse into the life of Howard. He was a kind, appreciative, down-to-earth and

happy individual, described as a great guy, a real character, a good old boy who represented rural Ontario. He enjoyed meeting people and working for his constituents, including the member from Northumberland-Quinte West with his issue with his racetrack. That was his number one priority: representing the people of his riding.

That's why, today, in remembrance of Howard, I hope his decades of public service stand as a shining example for all members in this Legislature. I know that Howard will be forever remembered by everyone who had an opportunity to know him and all the members of this Legislature.

Thank you to the family. Thank you, Shep, for your public service.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Norm would have kept the oil.

I thank all members for their sincere, thoughtful and heartfelt comments.

To the family: As we always do, you will receive a visual copy and a Hansard copy of today's testimonials.

One more time, thank you for the gift of Shep. We appreciate it.

ORAL QUESTIONS

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Mr. Patrick Brown: To the Acting Premier: I've noticed a startling trend from this government when responding to the Auditor General's report. The Minister of Energy said that the Auditor General didn't understand the energy file, despite her working at Manitoba Hydro for over 10 years. Next, the Minister of Economic Development claimed that he created thousands of jobs, despite the AG saying he couldn't prove a single one.

Next, the AG revealed the problems with SAMS, the Liberals' new computer system responsible for processing disability and welfare cheques. The auditor said that the Liberals knew about the glitches in their social assistance computer system before it launched, but the minister shrugged and said that nobody told her about the problems.

Can the Acting Premier tell us: Is the Auditor General correct or is your minister, once again, misleading what the Auditor General said?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member will withdraw.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: You know what's interesting is that the Auditor General herself has commented on the government's response to her recommendations. I was very, very pleased to read what she had to say, because I can tell you, on this side of the House, we take the Auditor General's reports very, very seriously. The

Auditor General herself acknowledged that we are taking action. In fact, she said that she was pleased—I want to say that that's her word, not our word—to report that 76% of the actions have either been fully implemented or were in the process of being implemented. She also used the words “exemplary performance.”

The Leader of the Opposition might not want to acknowledge the Auditor General's comments, but the Auditor General called “exemplary” the performance of—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Acting Premier: Let me just say, I will trust the Auditor General, again and again, over Liberal talking points.

The problems with the computer system's overpayments and underpayments are well documented by the Auditor General. But I want to bring to attention one particular story that the Auditor General shared. She referred to a story where SAMS, the computer system, overpaid a client with mental disabilities. The individual didn't realize that the benefit was too high, so the person spent the money, with no means to repay it. The Liberal government's response was to use debt collectors and freeze the poor individual's bank accounts; you left the individual without even being able to pay for day-to-day living expenses. That is sickening, and it's your fault. It's this minister's fault; it's this government's fault.

So I want to know: Will the government apologize to those on social assistance for their incompetence?

1100

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The Leader of the Opposition says that he respects the opinions of the Auditor General, so let me quote the words of the Auditor General. These are not our talking points; this is a direct quote from the Auditor General: “I want especially to note the exemplary performance of the Ministry of Education, Ontario Power Generation, ServiceOntario and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in implementing recommendations from our audits two years ago.” The Auditor General does not use those words lightly.

I think it is incumbent upon the Leader of the Opposition to acknowledge that we have made significant progress. As I said earlier, we respect and act on the advice of the Auditor General.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Acting Premier: Once again, I wonder if the Acting Premier has even read the Auditor General's report, because she has a different interpretation than everyone else in Ontario, and every media report that said it was an indictment of your government—a 773-page indictment.

But let's go back to SAMS: Not only did SAMS cost millions of dollars in over- and underpayments, but the system was broken from the beginning. SAMS, the computer system, was supposed to cost \$200 million; we now know it cost \$290 million. That doesn't include the \$140

million in incorrect payments. The AG said the government knew about the problems; the minister said she didn't know a thing.

So who knew? Did the Premier know about the problems with their computer system in advance; did the minister, the deputy minister? Did anyone in the government know, or are they saying the Auditor General is wrong? Yes or no?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Deputy Premier?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: As the Deputy Premier has said, of course, as soon as we became aware of the challenges with SAMS, we acted decisively. We brought in PriceWaterhouseCoopers with 19 recommendations. These are all part of our transition plan.

The Auditor General made five recommendations; these are all being taken very seriously.

I'd like to remind the Leader of the Opposition that the system that they brought in—SDMT—cost, in 2015 dollars, \$451 million more than SAMS.

CHILD PROTECTION

Mr. Patrick Brown: To the Acting Premier: Since I can't get an answer on the overpayments from the computer system, today I want to ask about the fact that the government closed 65% of the investigations at nursing homes without proper explanations. We referenced that yesterday as part of another pattern.

There is a disturbing pattern emerging from the government when it comes to investigations. According to the Auditor General, not one child protection investigation she reviewed was done within the required 30 days; not a single one met the requirement.

The AG said it took an average of more than seven months to complete an investigation—seven months for children who were suffering. For seven months, these children were at risk.

Why isn't the government providing resources to keep our children safe?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'm not entirely clear about this question. I thought it was about nursing homes, but it sounds like investigations in the child welfare sector, so I'll focus on that. Perhaps the member can ask another question about long-term-care homes later.

As I mentioned in the House earlier this week, we have a plan called the quality improvement plan. I will be requiring all children's aid societies and boards to report on the length of time for investigations, the number of cases that are being reopened, plans of care and checks against the child abuse registry.

This is part of our broader plan to implement the recommendations of the Auditor General, but I'm going to

go much further than that. We're going to have an action plan for child welfare that focuses on accountability, compliance, governance and transparency for residential services care.

I'm happy to provide more information in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Acting Premier: The minister's response to the AG's report was that she was disappointed. She should be outraged at the province's failure. All she could muster in response was to issue a second directive, but it takes more than a memo to protect children; it takes action.

It's been 13 years since the death of Jeffrey Baldwin. It has been seven years since the death of Katelynn Sampson. It is time to step up; it is time to actually do something. Mr. Speaker, why won't this government protect the children in our child welfare system? No more spin: What will you do to clean up your mess?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Speaker, we are moving on the Auditor General's recommendations. We have accomplished much good work in this sector with front-line staff, our partners and the child advocate. We'll continue to do that.

But as I just said, we have an action plan that's based on accountability, compliance, governance and transparency for residential care. One of the tools that we will be using to support this is what we call our cyclical reviews, our end-to-end reviews. Let me tell the Leader of the Opposition how this works. We will evaluate which children's aid societies are not performing well enough. Then a team from our regional offices will go into the CASs for a period of time to do a comprehensive review that looks at things like data management, case files, investigation into how they do their investigatory processes and looking at the board's oversight of the society, and an overall evaluation of the performance. So we'll continue to monitor that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Acting Premier: The government's response is hollow and sad. I would give the minister the benefit of the doubt if this was the first time they were warned by the AG, but the fact is, they keep on ignoring the Auditor General's report. So I'm going to specifically refer to what the Auditor General warned the government on before.

In 2006—yes, 2006—the Auditor General wrote that in one in five cases reviewed, safety assessments were late by an average of 15 days or never even completed. That's one third of the cases that you weren't doing your job on.

In 2006, the auditor said that in about half of the files reviewed, the full investigation was not completed within the required 30 days.

This year, the auditor said that not a single investigation was completed on time—not a single one. Not one more child deserves to have their life at risk because the government won't fix this broken problem.

In 2006, you were warned that there was a problem. Now you have a bigger problem. Instead of thanking the Auditor General, will you actually listen? Will you actually act and help the children in our province?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

I wanted to deal with a couple of things that I heard. I'm going to ask the member from Lanark to let the leader put the question quietly.

Member from Renfrew, when I stand, you sit. You don't wait for me to get quiet so you can heckle. Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: As I was saying, it's important to note that the Auditor General, I think, was overall very pleased with the progress we made.

Let me talk about that progress in our child welfare sector. We've made a number of investments, and the most important thing is that many kids are doing better. Fewer kids are coming into care; more kids are being placed in permanent homes; we've increased transparency and accountability for our CASs; we have new accountability agreements.

I would just say that prior to the last election the PCs introduced a white paper, much more comprehensive than anything in their election platform, and they outlined a plan to eliminate the ministry's responsibility for children in care altogether. They voted against the Ontario Child Benefit, which provides direct financial benefit to about one million children under the age of 18 and over 500,000 low-income and moderate-income families. So I'm not quite sure where they're coming from on this issue, but I can tell you—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Acting Premier. Last week, the Auditor General reported that Ontario doesn't actually have a plan for energy. She said that the Liberals were not "protecting electricity consumers' interests." Protecting families and businesses that pay a hydro bill is a basic fundamental that people expect the government to get right. How is the government getting it so wrong?

1110

Hon. Deborah Matthews: For just a moment, I had hoped that we would get a question from the opposition that reflected the conversation that's taking place around the world: the conference in Paris on climate change. It's just unfortunate that we're not talking about what's happening in Paris.

The sad reality is, though, we should have expected that because not one word in your nine-page platform in

the last election—you didn't even mention climate change. So we would hope that the NDP will get back to their roots and ask about those important global issues.

But I tell you: When it comes to energy, we are in fact making significant progress. We're taking cars off the road. We are closing our coal-fired electricity plants. It's the equivalent of taking seven million cars off the road. We have an energy plan. We're acting on that energy plan, and it's working in concert with the really important work that's happening in Paris as we speak.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: It's pretty clear to Ontarians that this government doesn't care about their concerns with that response. Ontarians expect the government to be able to get the fundamentals right. Instead, Liberal choices have meant that Ontarians paid nearly half a billion dollars to not generate electricity.

The Auditor General says that ratepayers are paying more to generate less. This is the trend; it's completely backwards. Paying more for more hydro is one thing, but paying more money for less hydro is something completely different.

Can the Premier explain why in this system, through the Liberals' leadership, they're getting it so backwards?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The member does have it right: The Auditor General indicated we were investing too much in conservation. Two weeks earlier, one of the best conservationists we have in this House, the official critic for the opposition, stood twice in his place and asked us to invest more in conservation.

But the reality is that conservation has many faces. For example, our industrial conservation initiative program is a program that basically takes 20% off the price of electricity for large industrial consumers. In our last budget, we expanded that to cover more than 1,000 more companies.

So now we have, getting the benefit of that reduction, six auto parts manufacturers in Guelph, two food processing plants in Brampton, 10 assorted manufacturing plants in York region, a textile plant in Woodstock, a printing plant in Owen Sound, a building products manufacturer in Burlington—all getting lower prices because—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Every time the opposition, the NDP, raise their concerns about Hydro One being privatized, gouging people, the response is that the OEB will protect people.

While the Liberals insist that the OEB will stop a privatized Hydro One from gouging families and businesses, page 218 of the Auditor General's report says the minister "has effectively cut the Ontario Energy Board ... out of the picture." She says it's the OEB's mandate to protect consumers, but "it has been difficult for the OEB to meet this mandate in any meaningful way."

How does the Acting Premier expect the OEB to protect ratepayers from being gouged by Hydro One's for-

profit shareholders when the government undermines the OEB at every turn?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The member should know that there's a bill before the House about to be passed called Bill 112. That gives additional authority to the Ontario Energy Board, so much so that they are mandated to ensure that all of the LDCs—and Hydro One is an LDC—have to have reliable service, effective service, efficient service. We've increased the fine for non-compliance to \$1 million a day. So if Hydro One or any other LDC are not performing, are not reliable, are not treating their customers properly—if they're not in compliance with what the OEB is asking them to do, the OEB has the authority to fine them \$1 million per day. Bill 112 actually has passed.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: The question is to the Acting Premier. Last week, Ontario's Ombudsman closed their last investigation into Hydro One. It's not because they were actually done with their work; it's because they were forced out by this Liberal government.

Why have the Liberals chosen to force the Ontario Ombudsman out of Hydro One and no longer provide public oversight of Hydro One?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The member knows that we passed legislation requiring Hydro One to have an internal ombudsman. Not only did we do that; we engaged Denis Desautels, former Auditor General of Canada, to oversee the implementation. Hydro One has already appointed—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Hydro One has already appointed a very well-known ombudsman, the former ombudsman for the city of Toronto. She is on the job. She is setting up the office. Denis Desautels is still overseeing that process. It's a very, very responsible way to move forward.

We have an ombudsman. That ombudsman will make a decision. If that decision is not satisfactory to the complainant, they have a right to appeal to the Ontario Energy Board. There's very, very strong protection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, I have a very simple question: Can the Acting Premier explain why she thinks that the public Ontario Ombudsman should no longer have oversight of Hydro One?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The simple answer is, we have gone from being a crown corporation to being a trading company on the TSX, so there needs to be a new governance regimen in place. The official parliamentary officers do not govern or manage private sector or stock-trading companies.

We do have an ombudsman who is in place, with the right to appeal, and there are other protections there. Under the Ontario Securities Commission, if they're non-

compliant with any of the rules—it's very, very transparent. They have to disclose the senior management salaries. We disclosed it in the preliminary prospectus. That's very transparent.

They're accusing us of creating a non-transparent process, and as a matter of fact, in order to become a private Hydro One—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Well, there are other jurisdictions in this world that do it completely differently. In fact, in Australia, a public ombudsman oversees all water, hydro and gas. In Spain, a public ombudsman oversees private companies that render public services.

Can the Acting Premier explain to Ontarians why, as of last week, Ontario families will no longer have the Ombudsman on their side when they have any issues or problems with Hydro One?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, there is a new CEO, a new chair of the board and a new board at Hydro One at the present time. Their priority is to be customer-focused. Mr. Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I tried to do it calmly. If you want me to get upset, I will. Let's just get through this.

Carry on, please.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, they have a priority of focusing on customer service.

The chair of the board, David Denison, issued a report several weeks ago referring to the Ombudsman's report. His response was, "The number of customers currently experiencing delayed billing has been reduced to 340 as of June from the peak of over 50,000 during the height of the billing issues in 2013-14." He has also indicated, "The timely issuance of accurate bills is the highest it has been in the history of Hydro One at a success rate of 99.8%."

CHILD PROTECTION

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. In the Auditor General's report, she highlighted that the initial cost of the Child Protection Information Network was announced to be \$150 million. The auditor actually believes that CPIN will, in fact, cost \$200 million once implemented across all 47 children's aid societies.

We need assurances that the cost of CPIN will not continue to balloon out of control, so that money that should be going into child protection services is not being used on computer programs and training. Will the minister tell us what the final cost of CPIN will be and assure us that child protection operating funds will not be used to set up CPIN?

1120

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I thank my critic from the opposition for the question. I've talked about CPIN—the Child Protection Information Network—before in this

House. It is all about the safety and protection of our most vulnerable children in this province. I'm very pleased that it is built and it's currently online in five children's aid societies. That represents 20% of the caseload. That's one file per child to enhance safety and protection, especially when CASs have to work across their geographic areas. By the spring, I hope that we'll have 30% of the case files online.

I am very committed to getting CPIN fully on board as quickly as possible, but I will not compromise the safety and well-being of children in care. As I said in the media, I will expect that the—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: —project will be on time and will be on budget.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Five out of 47 children's aid societies online and five years late is nothing to brag about, Minister.

To quote the Auditor General's report: "Although the ministry had provided 14 early adopter societies with about \$2.8 million in additional funding to help support CPIN implementation, the early adopters indicated they had incurred significantly higher costs, totalling about \$18.7 million, which were funded through the societies' own operating funds and may have impacted funds available for providing child protection services."

When the CAS has to use operating dollars to fund CPIN implementation, it hurts our most vulnerable children. Will the minister commit that all costs relating to setting up CPIN in child protection agencies will not impact protecting children and youth from harm?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I have to respectfully disagree with my critic because I think getting 30% of the case files on by the spring is very good progress. That actually represents 17 million child welfare files already successfully transferred to the system.

CPIN is largely funded by my ministry and it is about protecting the well-being and safety of our children so that we don't have unfortunate incidents, so that our front-line workers, who do a great job every day, can have the information at their fingertips.

This is a gradual process. This is a very specific tool that needs to be rolled out in time; it needs to be perfect. We cannot have any mistakes in the implementation of CPIN. As I've said, I am committed to making sure this remains on time and on budget. If we can get progress faster, I'll go for that; however, I will not compromise the safety of children in care.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Today is yet another day in the court case concerning Mr. Lougheed in regard to the Sudbury bribery scandal.

I have a simple question: If the Premier was called to testify, would she go and testify at trial—if she was asked?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Clearly, the third party must be running out of questions to ask. They usually ask this type of question with about 15 minutes remaining in question period. But midway through, it's quite telling on their part that they don't have much pressing government business to talk about.

The member opposite clearly knows the answer. The matter is before the courts. It's up to the courts to decide as to who they want to hear and at what time, and it's not the place of this House or this Legislature to intervene in that matter. I think it will be highly inappropriate to intervene.

What we know is that right now the Premier is in Paris participating in the climate change conference, making sure that Ontario is doing its part to ensure that they build a strong, healthier and sustainable future for our province, for our country and for the entire planet. We very much appreciate the Premier's leadership on the climate change issue, along with the Prime Minister.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, I assure you that there are extradition treaties between France and Canada; that I do know.

I just have to say two things to the answer to that question. The first part is that the government tries to make light of what is a very serious issue. There is somebody who has been charged with a criminal offence having to do with the by-election in Sudbury, on behalf of the Liberal Party. The government can try to make light of this all they want, but this is such a serious matter that the OPP laid charges and it's before the court. The very nature of this says it's serious.

The question I asked you—and there's no sub judice rule that applies—if the Premier is called to testify, will she—yes or no—appear and testify?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I very much agree with the member opposite that this is a very serious matter. The seriousness of the matter requires that you don't speak about it in this House; you talk about it in the courts, where it belongs. The member from the opposite end is making a mockery of the whole process by continuing to ask questions that do not belong in this Legislature.

Let's get back to the business of the people, Speaker. People want to talk about climate change. People want to talk about how we're building our province up, not about a court case that may be going on in some other part of the province.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms. Daiene Vernile: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. This government has prioritized transforming the developmental service sector, with a historic investment for developmental services over the past two years. In Kitchener Centre, I have heard from agencies, community leaders and families about the

positive impact that this investment has had. In fact, just this past weekend, I dropped in on KW Habilitation for their first annual Christmas bazaar, which was a huge success, and I even got some Christmas shopping done.

This transformation is not just about the investment, but we are creating a more inclusive Ontario through innovation.

Mr. Speaker, could the minister please inform this House of some of the innovations that are helping to create a province where people with developmental disabilities can live as independently as possible in their communities?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Thank you to the member from Kitchener Centre for the question.

My ministry works very diligently to ensure that people with developmental disabilities have every opportunity for dignity and inclusion. Through other ministries, including the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, we're working across government to ensure we are providing the right employment opportunities.

Included as part of this transformation is a shift from a sheltered-workshop model towards individualized community participation supports and training, and support for employment. As a first phase of this approach, developmental services agencies will not fill any vacancies that arise in sheltered workshops. However, no program will be phased out without appropriate alternatives in place.

This will be a well-considered, appropriately timed transition. We recognize that it is vital for the shift to be gradual and person-centred so there is a smooth transition for the individuals participating in these settings.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you to the minister for her answer.

This shift away from sheltered workshops toward a more individualized experience for people receiving day programming supports is something that agencies have been doing for some time. In my riding of Kitchener Centre, agencies have been making this transition for a number of years, and it's the parents and the dedicated workers who are helping to drive this change.

The executive director of KW Habilitation, a wonderful woman by the name of Ann Bilodeau, says that she "appreciates the government's intention to work with people individually, and the promise that no one will be left behind."

Mr. Speaker, could the minister please explain how the ministry is pursuing this transformation, and how local agencies are moving toward the goal of inclusivity in the province of Ontario for everyone?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Agencies will work closely with individuals and families to offer inclusive supports and programming that best meet their needs and goals. As I've said, no sheltered workshop program will be phased out without appropriate alternatives in place.

The shift away from sheltered workshops is not only about employment; it is ultimately about inclusion. Jobs

are only one of the options an individual can choose to pursue. They may prefer to focus on community participation, such as volunteering, or recreational opportunities.

The ministry will be engaging with clients, families, agencies, unions and front-line workers to carefully plan this transition over time. Last fall, we launched the employment and modernization fund, providing approximately \$4 million for projects across the province to help developmental service agencies enhance their employment support programs.

A number of projects funded involved shifting away from sheltered workshops, and we are already seeing some very positive results emerging.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. In last year's estimates, the minister stated that SAMS would have "seamless rollout." She said that no one would know that there was a change taking place. Obviously, it wasn't so seamless.

1130

We raised many concerns on behalf of social assistance recipients and caseworkers. How did the minister respond? She said: "Clearly the opposition is trying to make a mountain out of a very small molehill." Her very small molehill is \$90 million over budget and a year behind schedule.

My question is simple: Why did this government sign off on a project, knowing it wasn't ready for prime time?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: As we've said many times in this House, we have acknowledged the challenges that emerged with the launch and implementation of SAMS. I immediately went to the front-line workers and saw for myself exactly what was going on. At that point, we brought in PricewaterhouseCoopers to do an independent overview of how we should move forward.

I think it's worth remembering that we on this side of the House do take the Auditor General very seriously; in 2009, the former Auditor General detailed the problems with the system that the Conservatives brought in in 2002—that was the SDMT system. It was at risk of failure, and the Auditor General made it very clear that we needed, on this side of the House as a government, to move forward with new technology that was appropriate and could be sustained in the long term to help vulnerable people.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: The Auditor General was very clear: The government was well aware that SAMS was flawed from the get-go, but their testing was inadequate, and they didn't fix the defects. Yet, they proceeded blindly with a big-bang implementation. Now the big bang has blown up in their faces, but, as far as we know, no one in this government has faced any con-

sequences. Meanwhile, the most vulnerable have found their bank accounts frozen and their privacy breached.

Where was the minister? Where was the oversight? For not providing it, the minister failed miserably. Speaker, will she do the right thing and resign immediately?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I do take ministerial responsibility very, very seriously. As soon as I became aware of the issues, I took action. We now are working the plan to transition to full functionality of SAMS. We're listening to our front-line workers who have been so useful in terms of helping us with some of the technical issues that they face. We have adopted all of the Auditor General's five recommendations from her most recent report; in fact, these are all part of our transition plan.

We understand that there have been issues for our clients and for our workers, but we will end up with a system that will serve the people of this province, including our most vulnerable residents, extremely well.

TRUCKING SAFETY

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question today is for the Minister of Transportation. Minister, yesterday I asked why the government allows so many unsafe trucks on the road. We know that nearly 30% of trucks fail their inspections, but all we got from the minister was denial. We now know that when it comes to truck safety, our roads are now more dangerous, not less; accidents involving trucks are increasing, not decreasing; and injuries are up, not down.

When families are driving home for the holidays, they deserve to know that they won't be hit by a lost truck tire or a metal spike through their windshield. When will the minister stop endangering the lives of Ontarians, and take truck safety seriously?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member for the question—both the question that came yesterday and the question that he's asking today.

I do accept, of course, that there's a great deal of sincerity on the part of that member with respect to this issue, and I know it's an issue that members on all sides of the House understand is of crucial importance.

Road and highway safety is one of the most important priorities that falls within the mandate of the Minister of Transportation. I will repeat what I said yesterday: Over the last 13 years, the province of Ontario should be proud of the fact that for road and highway safety, we ranked first or second across all of North America.

What I said a number of months ago here in the Legislature, as it relates to truck drivers, for example, is that there is a need for mandatory entry-level training for truck drivers. What I said yesterday is that the ministry conducts approximately 110,000 truck inspections on an annual basis, and that's why we're actually seeing that the number of fatalities involving large trucks has been dropping—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
Supplementary.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Minister, in 2012, the government closed the Peel inspection station at Dixie and the 401. Now there are no truck inspection stations within 40 kilometres of this House. Think about that when you're driving home.

A trucker can drive 100 kilometres across the GTA without seeing a single inspection station. If that trucker does happen to pass one of the four inspection stations on the outskirts of the GTA, the privately run stations are closed most of the time.

When families—our kids and our grandkids—are driving home for the holidays, how will the minister assure them that the big rig ahead of them has been inspected and is safe?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member for the supplementary question. I heard pretty clearly that he was referring specifically to inspection stations or locations. What he neglected to include is that in Peel region and across the system, the number of actual inspections that are taking place hasn't changed whatsoever.

Whether we're talking about Peel region or we're talking about the GTHA or we're talking about the entire province, I think what people are most interested in is knowing that the Ministry of Transportation is conducting the appropriate number of inspections to make sure that that record I referenced in the initial response—13 years running, first or second across North America for road and highway safety—that we are doing the job to make sure that that track record continues.

We conduct approximately 110,000 truck inspections on an annual basis. It doesn't mean that our work is done. We'll introduce mandatory entry-level training. We'll keep working hard to make sure we get it right. I thank the member for his question.

FAIR WAGE POLICY

Mrs. Laura Albanese: My question is for the Minister of Labour. Our government continues to make strides to build our province up. We often speak about our commitment to renew and expand our infrastructure and other projects that will continue to improve Ontario. When I hear about these plans, I often think of the men and women who work on these projects. These skilled people across the province—and in my riding of York South-Weston—work hard to make these projects a reality.

We often talk about the importance of safety, but as we continue to build up Ontario, it's important that the people working on these projects get paid a fair wage. The Premier recently spoke about the Ontario's fair wage policy and the changes that she hopes can be made to it in the future. Can the minister please explain to the House how we are moving forward on this file?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member for that very important question. The government is committed to building a very strong workforce, and we want it to be fair, we want it to be balanced, and we want it to have very progressive policies for Ontario workers and for employers.

What our fair wage policy attempts to do is create that level playing field for bidders on all government contracts, and it minimizes the conflicts between organized and unorganized labour and competition for work. Under a fair wage policy, contractors must agree to adhere to the fair wage schedules and the labour conditions.

However, when the party opposite was in power, for some reason, they halted any updates to the Ontario's fair wage policy. As a result, it's not been updated since 1997. We know that after 20 years, simply, it needs updating. Some wages are now well below the minimum wage. As the member mentioned, the Premier committed to updating our policy on this. I've been working with my colleagues to keep that promise.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you to the minister for that answer.

I'm glad that both the Premier and the minister are looking at this policy with earnest intent. Many of my constituents who are impacted by Ontario's fair wage policy will be pleased to know that we will be moving forward on this.

The minister brought up the fact that this policy has not been updated for 20 years. Twenty years is a long time and a lot has changed. There's a lot of work to be done, and we have to make sure that we get this right. We must ensure that these men and women have a wage policy that ensures fairness.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain how he plans to achieve this?

1140

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you again to the member for this very important question.

It affects working people in this province in a very important way because, as we renew and expand the infrastructure in the province, it's very important—I think we all agree in this House—that the people who are working on those projects should get paid fairly.

We've had a fair wage policy in place historically that ensured the workers on these projects received the prevailing wage of the day. As I said, it hasn't been looked at in 20 years.

Addressing this is something people across Ontario are concerned about. We've established a working group. It includes contractors, labour and individuals who have very balanced expertise in this regard. We're reaching out to other ministries in this regard.

Speaker, with the help of these parties, I hope we can move towards some very positive changes and bring forward an Ontario fair wage policy that meets the needs of today's workplace.

RING OF FIRE

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. The Auditor General revealed in her annual report that the Ring of Fire Secretariat established in 2010 really hasn't accomplished much. It has created a bureaucracy of 19 staff and three

regional offices, and it has spent \$13.2 million. However, there are no performance measures to gauge and report on the effectiveness of the activities it has undertaken, and it has continually missed milestones for the development of the Ring of Fire, including “that development would start in the Ring of Fire by 2015.”

Speaker, can the minister explain why the Ring of Fire Secretariat has seen such a failure?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thanks for the question. I’m actually grateful to have an opportunity to respond to the member across the way.

The fact is that the Ring of Fire Secretariat has been doing very remarkable work and working with First Nations, working with industry. There’s no question there have been challenges related to the timelines. I’m very pleased that I got an opportunity to speak with the Auditor General in advance of her releasing the report so that we could discuss the fact that, indeed, setting precise timelines—factors such as commodity pricing, and factors such as the extraordinarily important work we do with First Nations, which I know you would consider to be an absolute priority, as well as the reality of the infrastructure needs and us being able to work with a positive and co-operative federal government, are key to putting those timelines in place. So the Ring of Fire Secretariat continues to do extraordinarily important work, work that I know they want to carry on, and we’re very supportive of that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: Again to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines: I’m glad you mentioned relations with First Nations communities in the Ring of Fire because, in 2014, you formed the Ring of Fire Infrastructure Development Corp. to accelerate infrastructure development in the region. You spent \$550,000 setting it up, and its operating budget is \$4 million a year. Part of its mandate is to bring relevant stakeholders to advance the entire project. The auditor reports, “at the time of our audit, there was no representation on its board of directors from any stakeholder group, such as First Nations, industry, or the federal government.” She goes on, “In addition, there were no set timelines for when stakeholders would be engaged.” No wonder you missed your target for development of the Ring of Fire by 2015.

Through the Speaker: Minister, how do you explain your failure to meet your own target?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Again, Mr. Speaker, I really am grateful that I had an opportunity to have the kind of conversation I had with the Auditor General. We’re very grateful for her report and really strong recommendations, and we’re working closely on it.

In terms of the Ring of Fire Infrastructure Development Corp., their key task is to bring the partners together. That includes—very much, we hope—First Nations, includes industry and, may I say, also includes the federal government. They have also been crucial to putting in place some key technical infrastructure studies which again are crucial in terms of us making decisions through the partnerships on the transportation infrastructure cor-

ridor that’s going up to the Ring of Fire. We recognize how crucial it is in terms of a resource development project. It’s in a remote part of the province that has never seen development before. Those are big decisions.

But we are also very keen to make clear that it’s not simply about building a corridor to a mine site. This is about having the opportunity to open up the north, to have community access to First Nations, and that’s the work that will be done with the Ring of Fire Infrastructure Development Corp.—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

By the way, it really doesn’t matter where the member from Prince Edward–Hastings or the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound sit; I can still hear you. I have about four other people I can add to that, as well.

New question.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. John Vanthof: To the Acting Premier: On Saturday, thousands of people will be rallying in North Bay to bring attention to your government’s cuts across the north: cuts to health care, cuts to bus service and basic mismanagement of labour relations throughout the north.

A particular example is the lockout at ONTC. We have got 200 workers who want to work—there’s lots of work out there—yet they’re prevented from working by this government. Will this government end the lockout and actually enter into meaningful negotiations?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I’m grateful to have an opportunity to speak about this with the member. We have had a number of discussions, and certainly you know how strongly we feel about—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): To the Chair, please.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: —collective bargaining and upholding that process as indeed there are some very important discussions going on.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. A reminder: You’re speaking to the Chair. Carry on, please.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I apologize, Speaker.

Certainly I think it’s very important for all members of the House to know how important we view the collective bargaining process. It’s one that we are engaged in as we speak. The important thing that needs to be noted, and I know the member understands this, is that when we made the decision to keep four of the five lines of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission in public hands, that was a huge step forward in terms of our commitment to northeastern Ontario and a sustainable long-term economy.

That means we need to get the collective bargaining agreements in place. We’re working very, very hard to do

that and I'm certainly optimistic, indeed, that will be the goal at the end.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again to the minister: Since the decision to maintain four of the five lines and the commitment to ONTC, we have seen bus stations closed, we've seen cuts to bus service—people who aren't permitted or aren't offered the opportunity to move where they used to move—and now we have got, at the shops of North Bay, people who want to work; there's work out there, and the government has decided to close the doors.

Please, at this point, what the government needs to do is enter into meaningful negotiations so the people of northern Ontario can get back to work.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: That's exactly what we are going to do and we are in fact in the process of doing that through our collective bargaining.

The member is right. There are some tremendous opportunities, particularly in the refurbishment shop. What is clear, based on the work that we did leading up to the decision to keep four of the five lines in public hands, was recognizing that there needed to be fair and helpful collective bargaining agreements in place in order for us to be truly competitive in the markets that, indeed, we're competing with.

The long and the short of it is that we have reached a number of agreements. We reached one recently with the IBEW just this past weekend. There are several other agreements as well. There's no question that this process is still ongoing, but we are very keen to find a resolution to it, and keen to move on, because indeed there are these great opportunities for the refurbishment shop as well as the other lines of the ONTC. Our government and Premier Wynne are committed to keeping it in public hands.

ADULT EDUCATION

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: My question is for the Minister of Education. Close to 800,000 adults in Ontario do not have a high school diploma, and currently an estimated 44,000 adult learners with diverse needs are enrolled in Ministry of Education adult education programs across the province. I know that it's important to constituents in my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore that we continue to improve and contribute to adult education through facilities like the Mimico Adult Centre.

In the past year, the Ministry of Education led six regional consults and one francophone session to learn first-hand about the challenges and opportunities that exist for adult learners in Ontario.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Can the minister tell the House about the important role adult education plays in Ontario's prosperity and well-being?

1150

Hon. Liz Sandals: Thank you to the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

He's right. The world is changing rapidly, and for our province to remain competitive, we must respond to ongoing social and economic realities. Helping adult

learners succeed is part of our government's economic plan for Ontario. Our challenge is to ensure that our adult education programs serve an increasingly diverse population of adult learners, a population that has multiple and complex needs that are difficult to address through our traditional models.

That's why, last year, my parliamentary assistant, the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, conducted consultations on adult education all across Ontario. The good news is that our many partners and school boards across the province are already providing innovative and flexible programs for adults.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I want to thank the minister, through you, Mr. Speaker, for that answer. I believe the ministry, local school boards and partners have done a tremendous job working alongside key stakeholders and with partner ministries to support this commitment and the vision of the adult education strategy.

Through this strategy, school boards are being encouraged to build on their innovative work to help more adult learners get the high school education they need to succeed. In a recent announcement, the minister noted the need for increased professionalization of adult education, with professional development opportunities for administrators and teachers.

Mr. Speaker, could the minister please tell us more about the recent announcement regarding the adult education strategy and what it means for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Last week, I indeed was pleased to announce that Ontario will invest up to \$9 million over the next three years to help more adult learners across the province get the high school education that they need to succeed and be part of a skilled workforce.

To help ensure that adult learners have access to the same high-quality programs and services, regardless of where they live in Ontario, the new funding will help school boards to create partnerships with other boards at the regional level; to build on the creative initiatives that are currently under way; to do research and develop and share best practices and opportunities; to ensure that high school programs for adults are responsive to adult needs and goals; and to strengthen the school boards' ability to recognize the prior learning and experience of adult learners to facilitate their graduation from high school.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is to the Minister of Energy. The Ontario Electricity Support Program is a rebate program for the 500,000 lowest-income households in the province. Today, we learned from a CBC news story that only 34,000 households have applied. That's less than 7% uptake.

Despite this, the government will still collect nearly \$145 million from ratepayers to pay for the program. If that money isn't claimed, I would ask the minister, where will it go? Will the minister return that money to the rate-

payers? Will the money be returned if the program doesn't use that cash?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: We're very pleased to have worked with the Ontario Energy Board to create the Ontario Electricity Support Program. The Ontario Energy Board has been doing very, very extensive promotion and advertising to get enrolment in the program. They've had radio commercials. They've had billboards. They've had advertising in newspapers and community newspapers across the province. There is no time limit for them to apply. We would have hoped that the take-up would have been larger at this particular point, but they still have as much time as they can to move forward with it.

The funding for that, through the Ontario Energy Board, is based on estimating the take-up over a longer period of time. So it's not possible to answer his question at this particular point because in the fullness of time we'll have—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. And before the supplementary, the bantering back and forth stops.

Carry on, please.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Speaker, his answer proves that this is just another one of their shell games. They had no idea what they were going to get when they instituted this, and now they're caught there with not knowing where to go next. If the enrolment stays low, they won't need the money they've collected for the program, but if they hang onto it, that's the definition of a cash grab.

It's not just the lowest-income Ontarians who can't afford electricity; every Ontarian is taken aback when they open their hydro bill. Businesses and middle-class families are struggling day in and day out to pay their hydro bills. In Liberal Ontario, you even have to think twice before plugging in your Christmas lights.

The auditor already showed that the minister is overcharging Ontarians by \$170 billion. If enrolment in this subsidy stays low, will the minister see the error of his ways and return the money not used by the program? It's a simple question: yes or no?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Speaker, I'd like to ask the critic for the opposition why he just voted against a bill that would have taken the debt retirement charge off residential and accelerated the withdrawal of it from industrial. He voted against that. I thought he would have learned more from his father. You know, his father was an MPP.

I have something from the Eganville Leader. They did a repetition of some of the stories that appeared 50 years ago. The issue of hydro rates was raised by the Eastern Ontario Development Association. The MLA for Renfrew South had to account for the government. His name was Paul Yakabuski. The member was eight years old at the time.

He comes by the subject matter of rate increases very, very well, but there was no answer from Paul Yakabuski from Renfrew South as to why the Conservative rates were escalating—

Mr. John Yakabuski: He fought for people on hydro rates, and I'll fight for people on hydro rates, too.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton Mountain, the Minister of Transportation, the member from Prince Edward–Hastings and the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke: Those of you who I just mentioned, I'm asking you to come to order.

The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

New question.

HOME WARRANTY PROGRAM

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Good morning. My question this morning is to the Acting Premier. Last month, the Minister of Government and Consumer Services announced a review of the Tarion Warranty Corp. to be conducted by Judge J. Douglas Cunningham. The review was long overdue, coming after years of complaints and concerns raised by individual new home buyers, consumer groups, the Ombudsman and MPPs from all parties. But then, the minister called the review into question by saying, "I anticipate that Justice Cunningham will find Tarion's processes validated as good consumer protection measures." The minister didn't even wait for the review to be completed; he already said he thinks everything is just fine over there.

The minister is unwilling to take consumer concerns seriously. Perhaps this is because one of Tarion's vice-presidents is the immediate past president of the Ontario Liberal Party.

The review should be about protecting the public—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I wouldn't mind if you allowed me to carry on, the member from Hamilton Mountain—second time.

The Minister of Economic Development will come to order.

Deputy Premier?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

Hon. David Orazietti: I'm pleased to respond to the question from the member opposite. I think, if the member opposite had taken into consideration all of my comments with respect to this review—we're launching the first review since this legislation was created in 1976. I'm committed to getting to the bottom of all of the issues with respect to Tarion that have been raised.

If the member has taken a look at all of the terms of reference that have been laid out, it is a very broad scope. Everything is on the table for Justice Cunningham. I am not prejudging or presupposing what Justice Cunningham will find, but I did also suggest, because of a number of the improvements that Tarion themselves have made over the last decade in terms of the builder registry and in terms of doubling warranty coverage for residents in Ontario—they have made some positive steps, and I

assume that the justice will find that they've made some improvements. But that's not to say more can't be done, and I'm certainly interested in and looking forward to his recommendations.

DEFERRED VOTES

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT ACTION PLAN ACT (SUPPORTING SURVIVORS AND CHALLENGING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT), 2015 LOI DE 2015 SUR LE PLAN D'ACTION CONTRE LA VIOLENCE ET LE HARCÈLEMENT SEXUELS (EN SOUTIEN AUX SURVIVANTS ET EN OPPOSITION À LA VIOLENCE ET AU HARCÈLEMENT SEXUELS)

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 132, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related matters / Projet de loi 132, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne la violence sexuelle, le harcèlement sexuel, la violence familiale et des questions connexes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1200 to 1205.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All members, please take your seats.

On December 2, 2015, Ms. MacCharles moved second reading of Bill 132, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related matters. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gélinas, France	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Anderson, Granville	Gravelle, Michael	Miller, Norm
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gretzky, Lisa	Miller, Paul
Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Moridi, Reza
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Michael	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Baker, Yvan	Hatfield, Percy	Naqvi, Yasir
Balkissoon, Bas	Hillier, Randy	Natyshak, Taras
Ballard, Chris	Hoggarth, Ann	Nicholls, Rick
Barrett, Toby	Hoskins, Eric	Oraziotti, David
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hudak, Tim	Pettapiece, Randy
Bisson, Gilles	Hunter, Mitzie	Potts, Arthur
Bradley, James J.	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Brown, Patrick	Jones, Sylvia	Rinaldi, Lou
Chan, Michael	Kiwala, Sophie	Sandals, Liz
Chiarelli, Bob	Kwinter, Monte	Sattler, Peggy
Clark, Steve	Lalonde, Marie-France	Scott, Laurie
Colle, Mike	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Coteau, Michael	MacCharles, Tracy	Singh, Jagmeet
Crack, Grant	MacLaren, Jack	Smith, Todd
Damerla, Dipika	MacLeod, Lisa	Sousa, Charles
Del Duca, Steven	Malhi, Harinder	Takhar, Harinder S.

Delaney, Bob	Mangat, Amrit	Taylor, Monique
Dhillon, Vic	Mantha, Michael	Thibeault, Glenn
DiNovo, Cheri	Martins, Cristina	Vanthof, John
Dong, Han	Martow, Gila	Vernile, Daiene
Duguid, Brad	Matthews, Deborah	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	Mauro, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Fife, Catherine	McDonell, Jim	Wong, Soo
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McGarry, Kathryn	Yakubski, John
Forster, Cindy	McMahon, Eleanor	Yurek, Jeff
Fraser, John	McMeekin, Ted	Zimmer, David
French, Jennifer K.	McNaughton, Monte	
Gates, Wayne	Meilleur, Madeleine	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those against, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 97; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the bill be referred for third reading? The Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I would ask that it be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1209 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr. Victor Fedeli: The lockout of Unifor workers at Ontario Northland is now in its fourth week with no end in sight. A community rally is being organized this weekend, with the national heads of both Unifor and the Canadian Labour Congress planning to attend, which is an indication of the severity of this impasse.

I wrote to the Premier last month, asking her to personally intervene to help move the parties closer to a resolution. Not only is there no evidence that she has done this, she has not responded to my letter, which quite frankly is unacceptable.

We had hoped that after the Auditor General exposed the government's faulty math on the ONTC fire sale, they would provide some certainty in northeastern Ontario surrounding the future, but this lockout has provided only more uncertainty.

The union has asked for mediation or arbitration three times, but the government has refused. The Premier doesn't need to pass legislation; she just needs to agree to send all the unresolved items to binding arbitration under section 79 of the Canada Labour Code.

So, as the holidays approach, I ask in good faith that the Premier, the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Northern Development and Mines step in personally and move this dispute closer to resolution for the sake of our communities in northeastern Ontario.

TECHNOLOGY FIRMS IN LONDON

Ms. Peggy Sattler: For anyone who thinks the 401 digital corridor stops at Waterloo, think again. As MPP for London West, I am proud to share some of the significant milestones achieved by London's thriving tech cluster over the last year.

Last month, two local firms were named to the 2015 Deloitte Technology Fast 50 list, an elite ranking that celebrates leadership, innovation and excellence among the 50 fastest-growing tech companies in Canada. Digital Extremes, one of the world's top gaming development studios, and Big Blue Bubble, Canada's largest independent mobile gaming company, earned the ranking by reporting revenue growth of more than 300% over the last four years.

The year 2015 also saw the launch of the Fanshawe College's new three-year video game design and development program, which combines programming and coding with the artistic and creative aspects of game development. Talent is one of the most critical drivers of growth in the tech sector, and this new program will provide the talent pipeline necessary to feed London's growing digital hub.

Two other London tech firms made international headlines in 2015: Race Roster and Voices.com were two of just five Canadian companies accepted into Canadian Technology Accelerators in New York, a program to help high-growth Canadian firms gain market traction in the US.

Speaker, we need to ensure that the right government policies and programs are in place to support the continued growth and success of these companies.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Mr. Bob Delaney: Christmastime in all our communities is a special time to offer thanks for the year we are finishing.

To my neighbours, friends and associates in Lisgar, Meadowvale and Streetsville, Andrea and I hope you are celebrating a year of good health and progress in careers, studies and family life. Our reminder to our friends each year is to reach out to those who may be alone or who may need a friend during Christmastime.

Remember our food banks: the Eden food bank, the Seva Food Bank and the Mississauga Food Bank. Help them help other households with a food or cash donation to bring Christmas joy where it might otherwise be just another tough day.

Merry Christmas to the Streetsville BIA, the Lisgar Residents Association, and to the Credit Valley AM, Meadowvale and Streetsville Rotary Clubs.

Merry Christmas to all who serve us at the Peel District School Board and the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, the officers at the Meadowvale and Streetsville local offices of the Peel Regional Police, and the firefighters at the Meadowvale and Garry Morden stations.

Our warm Christmas greetings to the doctors, nurses, staff, administration and volunteers at Trillium Health Partners and to those who ride with me on the MiWay bus and to the Milton GO line.

Andrea and I and our cat B    join with my constituency and Queen's Park staff, Andrzej, Magnolia, Monika and Manraj, to wish one and all in Lisgar, Meadowvale and Streetsville a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

LAMBTON CONVEYOR LTD.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'm pleased today to congratulate Lambton Conveyor on 50 years in business. It has been family-owned since 1965 and today is Canada's leading manufacturer of grain storage, handling and conditioning systems.

Lambton Conveyor is operated by Mr. Ray Moorhouse of Florence, Ontario, who was recently inducted into the Lambton Agricultural Hall of Fame. This was a well-deserved recognition for his accomplishments in business and his service to agriculture.

In 1965, Ray started Stormor Ltd. at the family farm to supply and install on-farm grain handling, drying and storage systems. This allowed farmers to dry and store grain at their own operations, allowing them independence in marketing and processing their product. Stormor grew into a highly successful business, now operating as Lambton Conveyor, located in Wallaceburg. Starting from a small barn and servicing local producers, Ray Moorhouse and Lambton Conveyor now market their grain-handling systems to farming operations all over the world.

Ray Moorhouse has been an innovator. In the 1970s, he made experiments in crop row width, which proved highly beneficial. In the following decade, Ray experimented with biofuels to dry grain. Despite having international manufacturing facilities and a global network of field representatives, Lambton Conveyor continues to value its close, personal connections with customers and associates both at home and around the world.

On behalf of the Legislature, I'd like to congratulate Ray Moorhouse, his family and the team at Lambton Conveyor.

SEARCH-AND-RESCUE HELICOPTER

M^{me} France G   linas: Soon northerners will be skiing, snowmobiling, trapping, snowshoeing and travelling through the bush or over the frozen lakes. We want to know that there is an infrastructure in place if an accident was to happen and that lives will be protected.

Since the announcement that the search-and-rescue helicopter at the Sudbury airport is being redeployed to Orillia, I have been asking questions. The minister never answered my questions but stated they are currently reviewing the report developed by the OPP on search and rescue in northern Ontario.

The report, Speaker—well, let me tell you. You'll remember that after the community outcry that this

helicopter would better protect the people of the north by being in Sudbury rather than Orillia, the government promised to do a review of the decision. Apparently, a report from that review has been tabled with the minister.

Let me tell you about that report. I have filed a freedom-of-information request for that report and gotten nothing. I repeatedly requested a copy directly from the minister and got nothing. I have approached the OPP headquarters, aviation base and media department, and gotten nothing. I have requested a briefing from the ministry on this report and gotten nothing. I have requested who has worked on this report and we can't identify a single person. At this point, I believe that the review of this decision to move the Sudbury helicopter to Orillia never took place.

Let me be clear: Northerners want their helicopter back.

KW HABILITATION

Ms. Daiene Vernile: This past weekend, in my riding of Kitchener Centre, KW Habilitation held its first annual Christmas bazaar, and it was a huge success. You heard me asking the question this morning to our Minister of Community and Social Services about this.

There were over 30 vendors featuring local art, crafts, baked goods and a raffle, with proceeds going to KW Habilitation's programs and activities. A special thank you should be given to the executive director, Ann Bilodeau, and her wonderful staff who pulled this inaugural event together.

KW Habilitation is a local, not-for-profit organization that started with a group of concerned parents and has now expanded to over 500 employees serving over 1,000 people and their families. The organization provides a wide range of services and supports to thousands of children and adults with developmental disabilities.

I do want to commend the Ministry of Community and Social Services, which funds 80% of KW Habilitation's operating budget. With this support, the organization is able to assist with creating a level of independence by teaching life skills through early learning and child care programs, family resources and continued supports through life's transitions.

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They're in a three-storey building which opened just last year. It was made possible with \$3.5 million from the province.

Mr. Speaker, this organization is an important resource in my community, fostering inclusivity.

SMOKING CESSATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington before his statement.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I seek unanimous consent from this House to wear a shirt that promotes quitting smoking and promotes better health and saving lives in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member is seeking unanimous consent to wear a T-shirt that I'm aware he is wearing, but before I do that, I will acknowledge to the member that you need to get permission through unanimous consent before you wear the item, and that if it's pointed out to you by the Sergeant-at-Arms that you're not supposed to wear it, you can't wear it until you get the unanimous consent. That goes for buttons and ribbons and anything in the House.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Oh, I'm sorry.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You better be.

I'm not admonishing the member; I'm explaining to the member the process.

Now I will ask for that unanimous consent to wear the T-shirt that you're wearing. The member is seeking unanimous consent to wear a T-shirt. Do we agree? Agreed.

The member for his statement.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Late last month, this government rolled out regulations related to the consumption of marijuana. Included with that regulation and the following comments was an acknowledgment from the associate health minister that "there is no scientific evidence that second-hand marijuana vapour produced from an electronic cigarette has any health effects on bystanders." In addition, she also said, "The law allows for an exemption because someone needs it for a medical purpose.... It's about negotiating. It's about balancing the rights."

This is in stark contrast with what this Liberal government was saying in regard to vaping while we had discussions on Bill 45 and while Bill 45 was passed at third reading. Why this government has been so steadfast against a harm reduction method that is proven to work against one of our greatest public health issues is perplexing.

Just this week, our counterparts across the Atlantic Ocean in the Welsh Parliament have repealed their extensive ban on vaporizers, and the UK Parliament—the national health system—has now determined that personal vaporizers will be used and allowed to be used as prescriptions to help people quit smoking.

GLEN AGAR RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Mr. Yvan Baker: When I think of the people who shape the quality of life in my community in Etobicoke Centre, I often think of the people who volunteer their time every day to make our community even better. Today, I rise in the House to recognize the important contributions of a group of people who are doing just that: the Glen Agar Residents Association.

The association, which is known as GARA, formed last year. Shortly after its formation, I had the pleasure of meeting with their board and working with them in support of their efforts on behalf of the community. I must applaud GARA for their professionalism and

constructive approach at tackling the challenges facing the community.

The issue at the forefront is the proposed redevelopment of 19 Glen Agar, formerly Kipling Grove Public School. The association and residents are concerned that the proposed development will lead to excessive traffic, declining road safety, an overtaxed sewer system, loss of green space and parking, and the devaluation of properties. Ultimately, they are concerned that the proposed development could negatively impact the quality of life in their community, and I agree with them.

Recently, Councillor Stephen Holyday hosted a community consultation with residents, city planners and the developer. It was attended by over 200 residents. During the meeting, GARA made a very professional presentation, along with residents, and raised these concerns very effectively. I was pleased to speak at the meeting to support GARA, echo their concerns, echo their opposition to the proposed development, and urge the developer to amend the application to ensure that any development preserves the character and quality of life in the community. I do so again here today.

Glen Agar is a beautiful community, and I'm proud to represent it. I'm also proud of and would like to thank the Glen Agar Residents Association, its board and members for their work to make our community—to make Etobicoke Centre—even better.

ESTÉE LAUDER

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I recently had the pleasure of visiting one of the manufacturing facilities of Estée Lauder in Markham. Estée Lauder owns 18 cosmetic and personal care brands worldwide, none of which use microbeads.

Je me réjouis de l'impact économique positif de cette entreprise sur la région. Je suis également fière d'avoir appris que plusieurs produits de marque Estée Lauder sont fabriqués chez nous, en Ontario.

The company prides itself on many things in its Canadian operations. They make changes to their production line based on ideas from the workers, rather than management, employing a bottom-up model. The facility also has an excellent record on safety, surpassing industry standards.

Ce fut un plaisir, lors de ma visite, d'échanger avec les employés, qui m'ont exprimé leur fierté de travailler avec de tels standards d'excellence.

John Fernandez, who works on the production floor at the Bentley facility, is passionate about ensuring safety in his workplace. He expresses this passion by writing poems about safety, which are shared with the entire production facility over the PA system every Monday and Friday. He gained recognition within the company and even published a book of his poems. I would like to end by reading one of John's poems.

Being determined in our way.
Puts safety ahead of the race.

To Accomplish our task, at a better Phase,
And make this world a better place.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE POLICY

M. Shafiq Qaadri: Je demande la permission de déposer un rapport du Comité permanent de la justice, et je propose son adoption.

Speaker, I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Justice Policy and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 109, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour / Projet de loi 109, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi et les relations de travail.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated December 8, 2015, the bill is ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ALTERNATIVE FINANCIAL SERVICES STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT DES LOIS CONCERNANT LES SERVICES FINANCIERS DE RECHANGE

Mr. Oraziotti moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 156, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to financial services / Projet de loi 156, Loi modifiant diverses lois concernant les services financiers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Hon. David Oraziotti: I'm pleased to rise in the House today to introduce new legislation, the Alternative Financial Services Statute Law Amendment Act, 2015. This proposed legislation would better protect consumers who use high-cost financial products and services outside of mainstream banking and credit union systems such as payday loans, installment loans, cheque-cashing, rent-to-own services and those with debts in collection. This legislation, if passed, would strengthen consumer financial protection in Ontario and enable regulatory changes

that would ensure our province's financial marketplace is fair, safe and keeps consumers well-informed.

ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPAL
MANAGERS, CLERKS AND
TREASURERS OF ONTARIO ACT, 2015

Ms. McMahon moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr32, An Act respecting the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 86, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

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STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Hon. Michael Chan: Tomorrow, December 10, is recognized around the world as International Human Rights Day. This day marks the adoption by the United Nations in 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Speaker, after the horror of the Second World War, this document set out the fundamental rights and freedoms to which all people are entitled. It spoke of freedom, and the basic dignity and worth of each and every person. It elevated the principles of justice and equality, and laid the foundation for democratic societies.

More than 67 years later, this document sits not on a shelf but in our hearts as the beacon to which all societies must aspire.

Ontario has had a strong human rights code since 1962 that upholds equal rights and opportunities for all, while helping to prevent discrimination. Our society is stronger and fairer because of it.

We can be proud that Ontario does its utmost to stand up for human rights around the world and here at home. We also welcome those who have been forced to flee their homes because of violence, terror and a disregard for human rights.

Over the past months, Ontarians have responded with overwhelming compassion to the plight of refugees who are being forced to flee from countries in the Middle East, including Syria. Our government is working with the federal government, municipal governments and across ministries to mobilize and identify provincial resources to support the settlement of those refugees who will soon arrive in Ontario.

Earlier this year, we were proud to commit \$2 million to refugee relief efforts and \$8.5 million to help agencies that serve immigrants and refugees to expand services as needed. In addition, Speaker, to ensure our commitment

is achieved, our government has established a Ministers' Ad Hoc Committee on Refugees. We began holding meetings last month.

As we observe this year's Human Rights Day, let us remember that we must stand together against forces that use violence and terror to divide our communities. I am proud to be part of a government and a province that is committed to reinforcing human rights. But there is much more to do, and we must be relentless in our shared duty to uphold human rights across this province.

On International Human Rights Day, let us join all Ontarians in giving thanks that we live in a society ruled by law and respect for individual rights. These freedoms have been hard won. They are sacred to us and they will not be relinquished, now or ever.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Statement by ministries?

Responses? The member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: December 10, tomorrow, marks that day in 1948 when the General Assembly of the newly formed United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This year's Human Rights Day highlights and underscores that freedom is the pillar of human rights. Freedoms are integral and the keystone. The freedom of speech, the freedom to practise religion, the freedom of association and others are all prerequisites for a society that values, protects and upholds human rights and civil liberties.

We are fortunate to live in a country such as Canada, fortunate that our ancestors—and today, we fight and protect and cherish those human rights. However, we cannot let our guard down and must forever be diligent in our defence of human rights and the freedoms that they are based upon. Even here at home, there can be little, incremental challenges to our freedoms, and our human rights can come under attack, such as we saw with Bill 109 and the limit on freedom of association that came with schedule 2 in limiting union members and their ability to have freedom of association.

While the adoption by the General Assembly was a great leap forward for human rights, the struggle to obtain and preserve these rights has not ceased with this celebrated declaration. We have seen genocides, oppression and tyranny in Africa and in Asia, and struggles for civil rights and basic freedoms across the globe. We see minorities across the world who suffer from persecution from organizations such as the Islamic State, Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab, who terrorize and dehumanize those who object to their skewed and evil world view.

But not all human rights violators are as quick to broadcast and highlight their evil deeds. Many attempt to hide their violations in the shadows, and hide behind a friendly veil. One of our largest trading partners, the Chinese government, is known to be persecuting practitioners of Falun Gong and Uighurs and Tibetans—organ harvesting, persecution and oppression—all because those groups are not obedient to a public policy view of their government. They even, as we saw last week,

refused to let a representative from our country go to China. Canada's Miss World, Anastasia Lin, who is a practitioner of Falun Gong and who has spoken out against human rights oppression and human rights abuses, was refused an entry visa to China.

The best safeguard for human rights is not a mighty army or countless declarations and celebrations in their honour. The best safeguard is a fundamental upholding and understanding of the rule of law. The rule of law guarantees freedom and protection to minorities from the tyranny of the majority. The rule of law treats us all equally and safeguards each and every one of us and all of our individual freedoms which make human rights possible.

I hope to see human rights, here and abroad, continue to triumph and prevail and be a value that governments across the globe continue to uphold and keep sacred.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further responses?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm always proud to rise in the Legislature on behalf of my constituents in London-Fanshawe. Today, I rise to celebrate Human Rights Day 2015, which will be held tomorrow, December 10, 2015. Human Rights Day is observed every year on December 10. It commemorates the day—December 10, 1948—when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This year, Human Rights Day highlights freedoms, recalling the four freedoms that underlie the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and two major human rights covenants, first articulated in 1941 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in his “four freedoms” speech to the US Congress.

The reason why the Roosevelts are being honoured on Human Rights Day is because, in 1941, the world lived through dark times: The Second World War had started. In response, Franklin D. Roosevelt offered a clear vision for a better future centred around four freedoms: freedom of speech, of religion, from want and from fear. Eleanor Roosevelt, his wife, helped his vision to be included in major UN human rights documents.

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Speaker, you would think that, in 2015, Ontarians wouldn't need to live in fear and they would have freedom of religion and speech. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. As the NDP critic for citizenship and immigration, I have the opportunity to speak with Ontarians who have moved to our province in hopes to make Ontario their new home. We are so proud of the diversity here in our province and in our country. According to Statistics Canada, in 2011, Canada had a foreign-born population of about 6.7 million people. They represented 20% of the total population—the highest proportion among the G8 countries.

We have one of the most culturally diverse and rich populations in the world, yet racism continues to exist. After the attacks in Paris and Beirut and, most recently, in the USA, Muslims from across Ontario were targeted due to their religious affiliation. We heard stories of

women getting attacked on transit because they wear hijabs. There was a story of a young man scared for his safety because he was Muslim. No one should ever feel as if they are targeted or feel afraid to be who they are.

In response to this discrimination, there have been organizations and individuals who have brought a positive and strong message to all Canadians. Last Wednesday, members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at launched #JeSuisHijabi, one of many interfaith initiatives taking place across the country to help build bridges with Canadians of all backgrounds and dispel stereotypes—about Muslim women, in particular—that continue to exist.

Discrimination and intimidation affect so many racialized communities across this province. Last week, a large group of organizations, such as the African Canadian Legal Clinic, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and the Ontario Human Rights Commission, and many high-profile individuals wrote a joint letter asking the province to take real action on the issue of carding, which disproportionately targets African Canadian, aboriginal and other racialized and marginalized people in Ontario.

Speaker, it's astonishing to think that same-sex parents would need to adopt their own children or that conversion therapy was legal in Ontario. Discrimination, whether it's racial profiling, homophobia, sexism or Islamophobia, still exists.

New Democrats condemn racism, Islamophobia and all forms of prejudice in the strongest possible terms. In the face of such violence, such as what has been happening to the Islamic community, we reaffirm our openness, our love for each other and our determination to build a better future together, with all people, in Ontario.

It is my hope that on this International Human Rights Day 2015, we as MPPs take leadership roles in our communities and ridings across the province to eliminate racism, prejudice, sexism, homophobia and Islamophobia in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

Before we move to petitions, I would like to gently ask the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington to be reminded that his unanimous consent was for his statement. I would ask him to be gently asked to remove the T-shirt and take a break. I would appreciate it. I have to go by the unanimous consent.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Absolutely.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank the member for responding.

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontario’s growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

“Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

“Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients’ access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario’s doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario’s families deserve.”

I support this petition, affix my name to it and give it to Megan to take to the table.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas a growing number of Ontarians are concerned about the growth in low-wage, part-time, casual, temporary and insecure employment; and

“Whereas too many workers are not protected by the minimum standards outlined in existing employment and labour laws; and

“Whereas the Ontario government is currently engaging in a public consultation to review and improve employment and labour laws in the province;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to implement a decent work agenda by making sure that Ontario’s labour and employment laws:

“—require all workers be entitled to a starting wage that reflects a uniform, provincial minimum, regardless of a worker’s age, job or sector of employment;

“—promote full-time, permanent work with adequate hours for all those who choose it;

“—ensure part-time, temporary, casual and contract workers receive the same pay and benefits as their full-time, permanent counterparts;

“—provide at least seven (7) days of paid sick leave each year;

“—support job security for workers when companies or contracts change ownership;

“—prevent employers from downloading their responsibilities for minimum standards onto temp agencies, subcontractors or workers themselves;

“—extend minimum protections to all workers by eliminating exemptions to the laws;

“—protect workers who stand up for their rights;

“—offer proactive enforcement of laws, supported by adequate public staffing and meaningful penalties for employers who violate the law;

“—make it easier for workers to join unions; and

“—ensure all workers are paid at least \$15 an hour.”

I couldn’t agree more. I’m going to sign this and I’m going to give it to Ross to be delivered to the table.

NEONICOTINOIDS

Mr. Han Dong: I have a petition here on behalf of the member from Brant.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas neonicotinoids (or neonics) are a class of synthetic insecticides that are chemically similar to nicotine, the naturally occurring toxin that is found in plants of the nightshade family. Neonicotinoid insecticides are designed to be less harmful to humans than pure nicotine, but this chemical is poisonous to all animals;

“Whereas the International Task Force on Systemic Pesticides—an international group of independent scientists—released the results of a comprehensive analysis of 800 peer-reviewed studies on neonics—a massive four-year undertaking. This unprecedented scientific assessment confirms harmful effects of neonics on bees and highlights serious risks to many other beneficial species, including butterflies, earthworms and birds;

“Whereas bees may be small, but they play a big role in human health and survival. Some experts say one of every three bites of food we eat depends on them. The insects pollinate everything from apples and zucchini to blueberries and almonds. If bees and other pollinators are at risk, entire territorial ecosystems are at risk, and so are we;

“Whereas the international panel of 50 scientists working as a task force on systemic pesticides says they have conclusive evidence that a group of widely used pesticides are killing bees and other insects, and harming the environment;

“Whereas with neonics, the science is clear: They’re unsafe. Researchers on the David Suzuki blog say, ‘there is clear evidence of harm sufficient to trigger regulatory action.’ They’re calling them ‘the new DDT.’ It’s time to ban these harmful pesticides.

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the use of neonicotinoids (also known as neonics) in Ontario be prohibited for use as pesticides as noted in the proposed legislation on November 25, 2014, and that further legislation be created to totally ban the use of neonics by 2020.”

I give this petition to page Aaran.

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ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES

Mr. Randy Hillier: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas electronic cigarettes, more accurately known as vaporizers, are between 95% and 99% cleaner than smoking tobacco; and

"Whereas electronic cigarettes are not a tobacco product, but rather a tobacco replacement therapy for those wishing to quit smoking, and a significant contributor to tobacco harm reduction in Ontario; and

"Whereas there is no scientific or medical evidence indicating that vaping causes inhalable exposure to contaminants that warrants health concerns;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario abandon schedule 3 of Bill 45, Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2014."

Speaker, there are hundreds of signatures on this petition. I am fully in support of it and will affix my name to it as well.

PARTNER ASSAULT RESPONSE PROGRAM

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition entitled Halt the Changes to Partner Assault Response, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Partner Assault Response (PAR) is the only government-funded program designed to change the behaviours of men who abuse; and

"Whereas the Liberal government has created a crisis in PAR by arbitrarily reducing the length of the program from 16 weeks to 12 weeks, without any research to support this change; and

"Whereas the changes to PAR were made contrary to the advice provided to the government by violence-against-women experts, front-line agencies, PAR providers, and provincial leaders across the sector; and

"Whereas the 2009 report of the Domestic Violence Advisory Council recommended that PAR be enhanced to include voluntary access and differentiated interventions as part of a comprehensive strategy to end violence against women;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of the Attorney General immediately halt the changes to PAR until a comprehensive review of the program can be conducted based on full and meaningful consultation with PAR providers and violence-against-women sector experts, organizations and agencies."

I couldn't agree more with this petition. I affix my name to it and will give it to page Lauren to take to the table.

LUNG HEALTH

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on ... Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

"Once debated at committee," to be able to be expedited for second and third reading.

I agree with the petition, sign my name and give it to page Noam to bring down.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I agree with this petition, sign my name to it and give it to page Dayo.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

M^{me} France Gélinais: I have this petition that was signed by Madame Theresa Lefebvre, from Dowling, in my riding. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the residents of northern Ontario, particularly people who are sick or elderly, depend on public transportation for appointments in southern Ontario;

"Whereas intercity bus routes have been eliminated by Greyhound, for example, all daytime routes between Sudbury and Ottawa" don't exist anymore;

"Whereas there have been serious reductions at Ontario Northland, including the elimination of Northland's train services;"

They "petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to: Ensure that Ontario Northland offers adequate and equitable intercity transportation service from northern to southern Ontario."

I fully support this petition. I will affix my name to it and ask my page Michelle to bring it to the Clerk.

GO TRANSIT

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Cambridge, Ontario, is a municipality of over 125,000 people, many of whom commute into the greater Toronto area daily;

"Whereas the current commuting options available for travel between the Waterloo region and the GTA are inefficient and time-consuming, as well as environmentally damaging;

"Whereas the residents of Cambridge and the Waterloo region believe that they would be well-served by commuter rail transit that connects the region to the Milton line, and that this infrastructure would have positive, tangible economic benefits to the province of Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Direct crown agency Metrolinx to commission a feasibility study into building a rail line that connects the city of Cambridge to the GO train station in Milton, and to complete this study in a timely manner and communicate the results to the municipal government of Cambridge."

I agree with the petition, I sign my name to it and give it to page Rachael to bring down.

LYME DISEASE

Mr. Rick Nicholls: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, Alzheimer's, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but the scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe;

"Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of its professional journal that

Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada particularly in southern Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario Health Insurance Plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process for establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives 45% to 95% of the time;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health to direct the Ontario public health system and OHIP to include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme diagnosis, to do everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians."

I approve of this petition, I affix my name to it and give it to page Megan Faith.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas mental illness affects people of all ages, educational and income levels, and cultures; and

"Whereas one in five Canadians will experience a mental illness in their lifetime and only one third of those who need mental health services in Canada actually receive them; and

"Whereas mental illness is the second leading cause of human disability and premature death in Canada; and

"Whereas the cost of mental health and addictions to the Ontario economy is \$34 billion; and

"Whereas the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions made 22 recommendations in their final report; and

"Whereas the Improving Mental Health and Addictions Services in Ontario Act, 2015, seeks to implement all 22 of these recommendations;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the Improving Mental Health and Addictions Services in Ontario Act, 2015, which:

"(1) Brings all mental health services in the province under one ministry, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care;

"(2) Establishes a single body to design, manage and coordinate all mental health and addictions systems throughout the province;

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"(3) Ensures that programs and services are delivered consistently and comprehensively across Ontario;

"(4) Grants the Ombudsman full powers to audit or investigate providers of mental health and addictions services in Ontario."

I agree with this petition, sign the petition and give it to page Keana to deliver.

ORDERS OF THE DAY**EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR STATUTE
LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2015****LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'EMPLOI
ET LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL**

Mr. Flynn moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 109, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour / Projet de loi 109, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi et les relations de travail.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Flynn.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you, Speaker. I'm pleased to rise again in the House for the third reading of Bill 109, the Employment and Labour Statute Law Amendment Act, 2015. I'll be saying right from the start that I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

Before I get into the details of the bill, which deals in part with firefighters, I want to take this opportunity on behalf of all in this province to express our sincere gratitude to the firefighters and all front-line health and safety workers who risk their own lives and their own safety on a regular basis to keep us safe. They believe in the concept of public service and they live that belief through their work, lives and careers. The selfless dedication and the heroism they demonstrate day in and day out have not gone unnoticed or unappreciated by anybody.

All of us who sit in the legislative chamber cannot thank our first responders enough for the work they do. This is one of the reasons why we proposed changes to three pieces of legislation that will, if they become law, provide increased fairness to all workers across Ontario in a number of ways. They'll strengthen protections; they'll enhance compensation; and they'll ensure that broader public sector transitions go as smoothly as possible while still balancing the democratic rights of workers in the province of Ontario.

More specifically, if passed, this bill will amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997, and the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act of the same year, 1997.

I'd like to talk briefly first about the proposed amendments to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act. My parliamentary assistant will go into further details on the amendments to the Fire Protection and Prevention Act shortly. But we've really increased, I think, our knowledge of fire dynamics and dangerous chemicals. Our fire services now have greatly improved protective equipment, apparatus and training, but we still need to remain vigilant. We know that firefighters have a very high incidence of occupational disease. Through these amendments, we want to provide further protections and further compensation to those who have been affected by these devastating illnesses. We all know in this House

that there's more to do. We remain committed to working with stakeholders and exploring new ways to support this sector.

This bill, Bill 109, would also provide greater safeguards to all workers in the province through making changes to another piece of legislation covered under this bill, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act. Our first proposed amendment to this act is driven by our commitment to protect injured workers and the right to file a claim with the board itself. Workers in the province of Ontario should know and feel confident that it's their right to file a WSIB claim and that this right will be protected.

Bill 109's amendments would prohibit employers from taking any actions against any worker with the intent of discouraging the worker from filing a claim or influencing a worker, perhaps, to withdraw or abandon a claim for benefits for work-related injuries or illnesses with the board itself.

Our proposed amendments would also enable the board to prosecute and impose penalties when employers try to impede or try to suppress or manage claims. This would strengthen the board's efforts by legislating stronger deterrents against employers that are engaged in any activities that are designed to either suppress or impede the reporting of a work-related injury or illness to the board by any worker in this province. It would also enable the board to prosecute and impose administrative penalties when employers try to impede or suppress those very claims.

To make sure our laws are respected and the workers are protected, we're proposing an increase in the maximum corporate penalties for any conviction of an offence under the WSIA, increasing it from \$100,000, where it stands today, to \$500,000.

It would also mandate by statute that the WSIB board of directors appoint a Fair Practices Commissioner as the organizational ombudsperson for the WSIB. The Fair Practices Commissioner is an independent, neutral and confidential resource for all injured workers, employers and service providers, and services are provided free of charge. These services include looking into individual complaints, tracking complaint trends, identifying system-wide issues, and recommending improvements to the WSIB.

Bill 109 would also enable the board to calculate survivor benefits based on the average earnings of a worker engaged in the same profession as that out of which the deceased worker's injury arose.

The issue our bill addresses is how the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board calculates survivor benefits for a worker who dies of an occupational disease and who had no or low earnings on the date of the diagnosis simply because, at that point in time, they had retired. This situation often arises because of the long latency period of diseases and illnesses that a worker later can have, such as, as we all know, cancer.

Currently, in situations in which a worker dies of an occupational disease and had no earnings at the time of

that diagnosis, the board's operational practice is to calculate survivor benefits based on the average annual earnings of a worker who's engaged in the same trade in which the worker's disease was contracted.

The proposed amendments would apply to payments for survivor benefits that are payable as of January 1, 1998, which was the date upon which the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997, actually came into effect.

Our proposed Bill 109 amendments to WSIA will protect the people of our province who are injured at work and will hold employers in this province accountable in a way that I know responsible employers will agree with. They're based on the principles of fairness, of justice and of balance.

My parliamentary assistant was going to speak after me and I think is ready to do that and will now speak to other elements of Bill 109, which includes further details on the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, as well as the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Well, Minister, it rotates anyway.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you, Speaker, for this time. I appreciate the time the House has given me for this.

Hon. Michael Chan: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade on a point of order.

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you, Speaker. I know this is not really a point of order, but I would really like to introduce a special guest in the House today. It's Mr. Ardeshir Zarezadeh, executive director from the International Centre for Human Rights. Welcome.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I did you a favour. It's not the time for that, but okay.

The member for Wellington-Halton Hills.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I should perhaps begin, Mr. Speaker, by stating for the record that I am not the parliamentary assistant to the current Minister of Labour, even though he said that the parliamentary assistant would follow him. You've recognized me in rotation.

I am actually the official opposition critic to the Minister of Labour. As much as I like him personally and we work together on many issues related to Halton region, I must say that from time to time we do disagree, and of course those disagreements come out in the House.

I am pleased, on behalf of our caucus, to lead off our response on third reading debate of Bill 109, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour. Many of the issues have been raised in the second reading debate, and I have to say that the committee process and the way this bill was dealt with was a farce.

We had one day of public hearings. There were opportunities for public presentations at committee. That was fair enough.

The following week we had clause-by-clause consideration of the bill. That was last Thursday. The government became impatient and apparently wants to pass

this bill before Christmas, and so they used a time allocation motion which was tabled just this week—late on Monday afternoon, as far as I know. We were informed that the government was going to be ramming the bill through committee and through the House. So the time allocation motion provided for reconsideration of clause-by-clause, an extraordinary sitting of the justice committee, which normally sits on Thursdays, and we sat today between 1 p.m. and 1:15 p.m. A number of the members who are present in the House today were in committee.

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We had an opportunity to continue to debate the amendments from 1 p.m. to 1:15 p.m., and then the hammer came down. I'm not blaming the Chair of the committee—obviously, because it was the time allocation motion that the powers that be in this place, meaning the Premier's office and the House leader's office—

Mr. John Yakubuski: Corner office.

Mr. Ted Arnott: —the corner office—had written to ram this bill through the House without any further debate or consideration. You know, Mr. Speaker, what that's like.

We had from 1:15 p.m. to basically 1:30 p.m. We voted on the amendments, one by one by one, with absolutely no debate. It was a farce of a process. And then the bill is referred right back to the House within a matter of minutes, really, and now here we are debating third reading.

I think there are members of the House who understand. I've been privileged to serve on both sides of the House, in opposition and in government. There needs to be a reasonable public process and discussion. Now, it will be said, of course, in response that our government used time allocation too, and toward the end of our term I would have to say it was used often. I would suggest that to the extent that it's used routinely, governments are making a big mistake because they're diminishing democracy when they do it and they're diminishing the normal democratic process. We've paid for our sins in the last number of elections, I think, in terms of 2003, 2007 and 2011.

The government of the day is using time allocation routinely now as a matter of course on so many bills, and I would suggest and submit that by doing that to the extent that they keep doing it, they will sow the seeds of their own defeat in due course. But of course they're not going to take political advice from me, and I understand that, but I just offer it in the spirit of Christmas—co-operation.

This particular bill is one that has three different schedules put together that are disparate issues. They're all labour issues but they're very different.

Our caucus is very supportive of the first schedule, the amendments to the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997. I talked about this at second reading and at committee. For years, I've been supportive of two-hatter firefighters. I'm pleased to see that there is at least some legislative protection for two-hatter firefighters in this

bill and I believe that that's a positive step in the right direction in terms of public safety for rural Ontario, small-town Ontario. I want to acknowledge the government for that and I want to acknowledge the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association for their willingness to move at least some steps in this direction. I think that's commendable.

There are other aspects of the first schedule but certainly we are supportive. Our leader, Patrick Brown, has for years had a very good relationship with the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association. We all, on all sides of the House, are very supportive of the work that they do. They are the heroes in our communities, and we can't say thank you enough for the work that they do and their willingness to put their lives on the line to protect and save the rest of us in crisis.

Interjection.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Yes, Patrick Brown has been very supportive of the firefighters, and they've been supportive of him through the years. The fact is that we've got a good relationship, and we're continuing to build on it.

The other two schedules are more troublesome and more complicated, Mr. Speaker. Schedule 2, on the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act: I would suggest that it should have been a separate bill. It should have been debated separately and it should have been voted upon separately, but the government has put two of these schedules together, plus amendments to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act. Quite frankly, we had amendments that we wanted to put forward at committee to both of those schedules.

The PSLRTA issue, the Public Sector and Labour Relations Transition Act, is legislation that we passed when we were in government in 1997. We heard at committee and in meetings that I had with some of the public sector unions that weren't always prepared to make favourable public statements about our government during our time in government and in the intervening years, who would say to me, "You guys got this part of it right." That was good legislation because it allowed for a free vote when there is a merger between two workplaces, especially in the public sector. What we call these merger-driven representation votes have taken place over the years going back to 1997. We hear from many of the public sector unions that the process, as it is, works for a number of good reasons, including ensuring that there's greater accountability from the union leadership to its membership, and also that there's greater acceptance, when there is a merger, of the final result and the outcome.

What the government proposes to do, as I understand it, is to give the minister the power through regulation to set some sort of a threshold: the government is saying it might be 60%. So when you combine two groups of workers together, when you merge the workplace, if 60% of them come from one union, that union would automatically be certified as the union to represent the workers.

There is some discussion about the threshold; I don't know how it's going to end up. But what we have heard

from many of the unions, and we agree, is that it is better to have a vote. I know that the New Democrats have shared that perspective in committee, and I want to thank them for speaking up in favour of the legislation we passed in 1997. Again, there were amendments that we had planned to put to strengthen that schedule, and we really didn't get an adequate opportunity, because the government became impatient and wanted to ram the bill through.

There are issues with regard to schedule 3, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act; suggestions that came forward from Les Liversidge, who is, I think, one of the foremost experts in terms of workers' compensation in the province of Ontario. He knows the history of the workers' compensation system like nobody I know. He came forward to the committee and offered his perspective and made, I think, a number of excellent points.

One of them is this whole idea of claims suppression, which the government would lead us to believe is happening: that big business—big bad business, I would add; of course from the government's perspective—is in many cases discouraging workers who are actually hurt on the job from reporting the injury, to try to keep their workers' compensation costs down. Les Liversidge pointed out that there is really no empirical evidence to prove that this is happening; there may be some anecdotal stories that some people tell. Of course, we were told that the Ministry of Labour believes it is a pervasive problem that exists.

But some of the business groups were saying to us that this is basically gratuitous beating up on business and creating the big bad business image that the business world is out there to try to suppress claims. Again, if the government has empirical evidence to prove that this is a big issue, I don't know why they didn't table it at committee. I don't know why it didn't come out in second reading debate. It surely hasn't come out so far in third reading debate. I would challenge them to give it to us, if they have it.

Those are some of the issues we discussed. Again, I am certainly prepared, on balance, to support this bill and vote for it, when it comes to a vote at third reading, because I think that the fire issue is very, very important. That's not to suggest that the other two issues are not important; they are. I think these are issues that, unfortunately, are going to have to be revisited in the future. Hopefully, after 2018, if we're given the opportunity once again to govern, there may be an opportunity to fix the problems that most likely will manifest themselves if this bill is indeed passed as is.

The fact is that it has been an interesting process, and I think it is a foregone conclusion that Bill 109 is going to pass into law, probably today, and receive royal assent. But again, I would caution the government, encourage them and urge them to give an opportunity for reasonable public process for legislation like this, to allow the committees to do their work, to allow them to have reasonable discussion of amendments, so that when we come forward with the bill, there's at least a sense that there

has been a public discussion and people have had their say, and not that the government has rammed the bill down the throat of the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. We don't want to tie up this bill unnecessarily. I know there is lots of goodwill in the House before Christmas. We want to proceed. Again, I want to express my appreciation to our firefighters across the province of Ontario for the great work they do, and thank all the people who participated in the process at committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: As always, it is my privilege to stand in this fine Legislature, not just on behalf of the many voices in Oshawa but also for people across the province, and have the opportunity to speak to this bill, the Employment and Labour Statute Law Amendment Act. I've been glad to bring voice to some of the specific labour issues that people are interested in advancing and the positive change we're interested in bringing.

As I have said many times before, and as we've heard, this bill is comprised of three parts—three schedules. The first schedule is essentially the firefighters' bill. It outlines changes and improvements to benefit the firefighters, and I know that they have been supportive of this bill. As the community safety and correctional services critic, I am standing here in support of schedule 1.

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We've talked a lot about schedule 2 being the poison pill of this omnibus bill. We spent a lot of time debating in committee the negative implications and the problems that we had with schedule 2. As we've heard from the opposition member, during committee we spent a lot of time talking about democracy, fairness and a fair process, and about the strength of the trade union movement—which, I would say, has grown out of conflict and fire in some cases, but certainly I would give the trade union movement full and total credit for not being afraid of a fight.

But here we have in schedule 2 a consideration that when there is a merger of workplaces and bargaining units, if there is a bargaining unit that is larger than 60%, they just win automatically and become the representation for the workers in that workplace, without having that democratic vote. We stand here in opposition to that—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Is there any reason why people are yelling across the floor? If you have a problem or want to discuss it with the minister, you two can go outside.

Continue.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you can see, this is an issue that gets people fired up, so I'm glad to stand here and add to the discussion. I was glad to be able to stand in committee and hash it out there. It was one of the few opportunities that I've had to really get on record what I felt needed to be said.

We're talking about mergers, workplaces, votes and fundamental democracy, and at our last committee

meeting last Thursday, we took the time that that topic deserves. Democracy is a big topic, and we gave everyone a chance to speak. We had a number of our caucus colleagues there, standing up in defence of democracy. I recognize that within the labour movement currently there are different voices, but fundamentally we stood up for what we believe.

If a union loses a vote, then it loses a vote. As we all know, sometimes with democracy the outcome may be a little bit messy or uncomfortable. You might remember, Mr. Speaker, in the last provincial election or perhaps the last federal election, that sometimes there's some transitioning to do, where we learn, we grow, we re-evaluate, but we come back stronger.

I think that in a workplace where there's an opportunity to have a vote you have that opportunity for growth. Certainly, if a smaller union is a better representative, or potentially with a stronger collective agreement, they might fight more fiercely if there's the need, but that union deserves a chance to represent the members, and the members always should have that right, as protected by the charter, to choose their representation. So we maintain our position on schedule 2.

Schedule 3 has a number of positive changes to the WSIA, but personally I have a connection to it, because my Bill 98, the Protecting Victims of Occupational Disease Act, had two main parts to it. Then Bill 109 came forward and addressed half of my bill, among other things, but just half.

It focuses on benefits for surviving spouses and those who have lost their partners to occupational disease. This was a bill came out of a lot of work for the last four years. Four Ministers of Labour had been involved in the process, and my colleague from Nickel Belt has spent a lot of time focused on this issue. There were a number of people in the greater labour community who were bringing voice to this issue of fairness, or unfairness, that was targeting widows in their time of grief. It was an awful issue. So here we see a fix, and we are pleased to see that fix, but as I said, this is half of what my bill would have done.

We had put forward, as the NDP caucus, a number of amendments. Unfortunately, today in committee, when we were able to address these amendments, we didn't have any time to discuss it, because it was time-allocated. I will come back to that.

The amendments that we brought forward were both to expand the scope of Bill 109 enough to include both sections of mine. It wasn't just about the widows and surviving spouses; it was about the workers themselves.

When a worker gets sick on the job and is diagnosed with an occupational disease, it shouldn't matter, when they are diagnosed, if they've retired or not. This is about fairness to the actual worker himself or herself, and not just the widow's pension, the widow's benefits—not to minimize that, but there's a big picture here. There is an individual who has died from an occupational disease, and it isn't just about the surviving spouse. It's about that individual and their dignity, and about the compensation.

To be diagnosed with an occupational disease, it has already been admitted that they have been injured or exposed to harm on the job.

We've heard the minister talk about the latency period and the nature of the injury, the nature of occupational disease, and recognizes that. You know, I've appreciated working with the Minister of Labour on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you about myself. This has been an interesting journey with this bill. I tend to be an optimistic individual. I tend to be full of love and hope and optimism, and always have been. I want to tell you how I thought this process would go.

I actually thought that if there's a good idea, if there's a need to be addressed that comes to this Legislature, it can grow and become changed. I thought that if there was an issue out in the greater community that needed to be solved, that needed to be addressed, it could come through this process and be strengthened through consultation, through involvement, with all of the experts in the backrooms weighing in and all of the experts out in the greater community weighing in. I thought, with years of work, many people involved, support from the minister and support from the ministry, that we might actually see that change. I was wrong. However, I'm jumping ahead.

I would like to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, and remind us—actually, I'd like to read from the Hansard. During second reading of my Bill 98, during the debate, I was pleased to have the Minister of Labour speak to my bill directly, so I'm pleased to read his thoughts on Bill 109 and Bill 98 and how they connect.

In the words of the Minister of Labour, "It is a pleasure, once again, to rise in this House and speak to the bill that's being put forward by the member from Oshawa. Let me right from the start tell the member that I'll be supporting the bill, and certainly I've urged my colleagues to support the bill....

"It's the type of issue that I think crosses those partisan lines. It's wonderful to see an initiative come forward from the New Democratic Party that is very similar to an initiative that's being put forward as a piece of legislation from the government itself....

"If you look at Bill 98 and you look at Bill 109, you'll find that there are an awful lot of similarities. I'm urging all members of this House, as I said, to support this bill, because I think that as Bill 109 moves through the committee process, and amendments and different ideas come forward, opinions come from all three parties during the standing committee process, there may be, in fact, some room where amendments could be brought forward which would actually meet the intent of what the member from Oshawa is proposing in Bill 98."

Mr. Wayne Gates: Wrong.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'll come back to that.

"Let me close with my thanks to the member from Oshawa for bringing this issue forward. My thanks to her for sitting down with me ... and discussing what she was hoping to accomplish, and my thanks to her for listening to me, as Minister of Labour, explaining how I think that

we can work together on this. I think we can get to the place that you would like to see us get to in the end.

"I'm supporting the bill. I hope all members on this side of the House will support the bill, and I'm assuming everybody on that side of the House will as well."

Mr. Speaker, it was a great day. I was again filled with love and hope and optimism. It crossed partisan lines, and, actually, it was pretty special, bringing an idea from the community forward into this Legislature, with so many people involved in the process. To have such hope, as we heard there, that there might have been room in the committee process to bring these ideas forward and strengthen them—oh, what a letdown.

1620

I've talked about section 2—

Mr. John Yakabuski: The Liberals did it to you again.

Mr. Randy Hillier: They're ruthless.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Oh, I'm learning. I am learning. I've had the optimism almost beaten out of me. However, not entirely—they'll have to keep trying.

As I said, I have appreciated working with the minister, but I haven't appreciated working with some of the decisions that others on that side of the House have been involved in.

The committee process has been fascinating. Again, I came in here thinking that the committee process was actually a process, not a Liberal wall. I thought that, when we brought forward amendments, we could debate them, discuss them, duke it out if needed: You win some; you lose some. I know that we aren't going to agree with every bill and that this is—anyway, it has been a journey.

Last Thursday at the committee process, we had the chance to get into conversations about democracy, which is why I thought we were all here. But I'm recognizing that the Liberal government seems to have a governing belief, and that is that there's nothing more important than their agenda. I would argue that there is something more important than their agenda, and that is the people of Ontario and what is best for them.

This bill has been time-allocated, and so today we had the second part of the committee process so we could discuss schedule 3.

Interjections.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm going to invite all of you to appreciate this debate since I actually have the chance to debate, as I haven't in committee.

But anyway, the time allocation process has been an interesting one. I recognize that in this House we've talked about time-allocating and shutting down debate, putting limits on the conversation, but I hadn't actually experienced it in the committee process. So today, when we had to debate schedule 3, which was on the WSIA and had everything to do with strengthening workers' rights, their benefits and talking about compensation, we had 15 minutes—15 minutes—to actually discuss 15 amendments, and then it just went to a straight vote. Watching this process unfold, the government was, first of all, part of the 15-minute discussion. That's fine. We were all discussing it.

But then I had two minutes—two minutes—to address all of the upcoming amendments and not really an opportunity to get into the nitty-gritty. I'd like to say that there were some real issues in there. There was an amendment that we put forward that would provide support, as I said, for the worker and fair compensation for a worker diagnosed with an occupational disease, regardless of when this individual had retired—not just the widows and surviving spouses. But we didn't have a chance to discuss that because it was ruled out of order. I think I was told it was out of the scope of Bill 109. But I don't understand how that could have been the case when we were talking about two sides of the same issue. There we go.

Then amendment 7: It was a small wording piece; it was about “may” versus “shall.” We want to be clear. We want our legislation to be definite. We bring forward amendments to tighten up the language, to make it clear so there are no loopholes, because every loophole we seem to find, we end up debating in the Legislature and bringing forward a whole new piece of legislation. So why wouldn't we head off those loopholes when we identify them?

Everything we put forward, almost as a matter of a political principle, any amendment that came forward: “No.” Not only no discussion because it was time-allocated—we had time to debate one amendment, and then it just went to straight voting where they read off the number of the amendment and it was, “Vote yes, vote no,” and everything was voted down by this government. There was no discussion, as it goes with time allocation, but also no consideration. Obviously, they would consider the amendments before committee process, although this has been a rushed process—we haven't even had the chance to see the Hansard of the depositions or submissions, with how quickly things have moved. But I wonder about the total lack of consideration.

Another amendment that we brought forward was about putting the burden on surviving spouses versus the burden on the board. That was a very basic fairness issue. There's no reason that it couldn't have gone through. It wasn't a big political discussion. If you're going to say that the rights of surviving spouses and widows should be considered, then do that—not just halfway.

Today, I discovered that they were playing politics with a real issue. I've learned a lot in this process. As I said, I appreciated working with the minister. I talked to him earlier this week. Things were feeling positive. It was sort of a, “We're all on the same page in the spirit of the legislation, in the spirit of the bill.” But when I sat in the room, I thought, “I wonder if the left hand knows what the right hand is doing?” Because in sitting across from the Liberal government in committee, I wonder—I wonder, that's all. I don't understand how there can be such a difference between what the minister and what people are talking about versus what's happening in that room.

What happens in that room is, “Oh, here's the checklist. It says, “Don't support, don't support, don't support,

don't support.” So nothing gets supported. There's no conversation; there's no room to manoeuvre; there's no wiggle room. It is just “Meh.” We're there, and the feeling of futility is overwhelming.

As I mentioned, I wonder if the left hand knows what the right hand is doing. I'm going to go with no.

I learned something else. You showed me. Last week, I got up and I railed against the system, and I talked for 20 minutes about democracy. I will admit, it was cathartic. I will admit, it felt awfully good to be able to bring voice to the issues that led me to run in the first place to represent my constituency. Then, today, with just “Nope, nope, nope, nope, nope,” well, you showed me. I think if your goal was to beat the optimism out of the room—if your goal was to say, “You manipulated the process last week, so now we're going to manipulate the process this week”—if that's really how we do business in this room, shame on us.

If committee is really just going to be a sham and not even a real and legitimate part of the process, then what are you doing? If it's just for appearances, well, I'm disappointed for Ontarians, quite frankly. The people of Oshawa, and people across Ontario sent us here—well, sent me here, personally, but I know you've all been elected—and they deserve to have their voices heard. They deserve to have their ideas actually be considered and respected, and they're not being respected at all. I've watched what happens in committee when people come to talk: You are not interested.

People in our communities across the province—whether GTA, whether downtown, whether up north—everywhere across Ontario, there are specific needs. Those needs need to be addressed. Those needs need to be fixed. We need to have open consultation. We need to travel bills. We need to have real conversations, and not just a government that bullies at every opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I've appreciated the opportunity to speak to Bill 109. I'll be honest: I'm sorely disappointed in the process and in the government I sit opposite. I hoped for more. And though I said that today I've had the optimism kicked out of me, I will continue to be optimistic and work to represent the people of this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Colle: I'm here to speak about Bill 109. I'm not going to talk about process and frustration; I'm going to talk about the work that we have to do for the people of Ontario. In this Bill 109, some of these issues that are addressed have been around this Legislature in some cases over 20 years. I'll talk about the issue of the double-hatters in the firefighter community, where volunteer firefighters could never get an opportunity to be part of a regular firefighters' association. This bill finally addresses that—after about three governments, I think. This is what Bill 109 does. Those are the facts. It's not process. It finally fixes the double-hatter situation, which I think I've heard about for over 20 years. Bill 109 fixes that; that's a fact, not process.

1630

The next thing that this bill deals with is that it actually incorporates the firefighter legislation into the labour workplace legislation. That has never been done before. The fact is, the firefighters are now protected by the full weight of labour law in Ontario. That's a fact. It's being done in Bill 109. That is another protection for our first responders which is in this legislation.

Another first in this legislation, which is long overdue, is that—as you know, coming from Hamilton, Mr. Speaker—there are cases that I've heard in Toronto and I'm sure you've heard it in Hamilton where sometimes, if a worker gets injured on the job, they are told, "Don't report the injury. Be quiet; don't worry." Anyway, for the first time in Ontario labour law, there's a specific section that prohibits this type of injury-reporting suppression, and the fine is up to half a million dollars if an employer is caught doing that. That's a fact. It's not process. It's in Bill 109 for the first time.

In terms of other parts of this bill, it is, again, listening to not only the good men and women in organized labour, but outside, who have trouble with things like survivor benefits. It tries to fix that problem, which has been with us for years.

There's one section here which is controversial, and there's disagreement.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Take it out.

Mr. Mike Colle: I heard the member from Niagara Falls. He was at committee. I think he made a very good presentation at committee. I listened to him for 20 minutes. He spoke about his incredible career in the labour movement, and I respect him for it. But, as you know, whether it's the labour movement or whether it's this House, not everybody agrees all the time. And, God forbid, sometimes unions disagree with each other. Have you ever heard unions actually disagree? In this legislation, there isn't total unanimity about how to deal when there are mergers in unions. You've got Unifor saying one thing; you've got CUPE saying another. Sure, the bill doesn't answer everybody's concerns about this issue. It's not an easy issue and there's no simple solution. But at least it tries to deal with these issues in a reasonable way. Perfect? No. But at least it tries.

There's the member from Wellington, Mr. Arnott. For years, he has been talking—every time I see him, I think of a guy with two hats. Finally, because of his persistence—and not whining; he's persistent—we've got him recognized in Bill 109. I give him tribute for that. He fought for this for how many years? I don't know; 20 years? Anyway, it's a good, strong piece of legislation that I think will help the working men and women in this province who work hard and try to put food on the table.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you so very much, Speaker. This bill reminds me of an old adage that is very applicable in this case: If you're asked to choose between the lesser of two evils, you still choose evil. That's what Bill 109 is. Bill 109 has three schedules. If you support

Bill 109 and the improvements under schedule 1, you also have to choose the evil of schedule 2, which is a direct, unmitigated assault on freedom of association in the workplace. It's absolutely horrendous and atrocious that this Liberal government would launch such an all-out assault on workplace democracy and hide behind schedule 1 of the professional firefighters.

But I'm not going to support this bill just because of that. What is even worse, or just as atrocious, is this Liberal government's assault on procedural democracy in this House. They have launched and assailed an all-out attack to stifle and prevent any discussion or any debate on Bill 109.

Just last Thursday, I was in committee with the parliamentary assistant. All four members on the Liberal side of that committee were mute. They were silent. It was deaf, dumb and blind there in that committee. They refused to engage in a discussion. They refused to argue their point, because they knew they were bringing in a time allocation motion that would kill debate this week with one hour, no more committee. It's absolutely unacceptable. This is procedural tyranny that this government is engaged in.

I want to read a short letter from OPSEU, the Ontario Nurses' Association and CUPE to the Minister of Labour:

"October 1...

"Dear Minister Flynn,

"The Ontario Legislature currently has before it Bill 109, an amendment to the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act.... If adopted, Bill 109 would represent a dramatic assault on workplace democracy in our province."

It is signed by Warren "Smokey" Thomas, president of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union; Linda Haslam-Stroud, president of the Ontario Nurses' Association; and Fred Hahn, president of CUPE.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I think I've been more than fair and lenient. Shall we cut it back a bit, folks? Thanks.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you, Speaker. They are getting a little rambunctious in their tyranny of this House today.

Maybe what is happening with this letter, just the one little paragraph I spoke about—I'll refer back to the parliamentary assistant's comments, "Well, you know, some unions like it, some unions don't. You know, we really can't satisfy everybody." You can't satisfy everybody when you purposely go out to pick winners and losers. This government has always engaged in picking winners and losers.

It just so happens that two of those unions, the SEIU and Unifor, that are supportive of Bill 109, that are supportive of this assault on workplace democracy, are two of the unions they are trying to appease with Bill 109. It just so happens that I was going through Elections Ontario financial records. In 2014, the SEIU gave the Liberal Party \$86,000. Surprise, surprise—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Point of order, the member from Eglinton—Lawrence.

Mr. Mike Colle: The member from Lanark has repeatedly done this in the House and in committee. He repeatedly impugns motive, and he needs to be told that this is not allowed in the Legislature. As we deal with issues, you cannot impugn motive, either directly or indirectly. He has done it repeatedly without any admonition.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Stop the clock. The member has a point, and I think the member realizes how far he can go with that. You can't accuse them of doing something illegal. So I would suggest that you pull that back a bit.

1640

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you, Speaker. It wasn't impugning anything. This is on the public record. These are public documents, and as I've said, the SEIU has made a contribution. One of the other unions has also made a contribution. So, Speaker, it's on the public record. Everybody can go and see. Maybe for your own edification—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Stop the clock. Let's put it this way: The member knows that, yes, it's on the record. We all know that: All donations are reported. But you cannot tie that into the decision they're making on a particular issue. So I would suggest you pull back on that immediately. Thank you.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you, Speaker, for that judicious and thoughtful ruling. We'll try not to stray too far any further.

However, it is interesting, and I do ask the people who are listening or the people who may be reading Hansard later on to go through the Elections Ontario financial filings. Go through them. Draw your own conclusions as to what the public record demonstrates. I think people might be interested and learned in what they may find in the public record. I know there's a big forest of details out there in the public record, but if you sift through them and carefully navigate and look, you'll find some interesting, interesting elements. I'll allow others to connect whatever dots they may find in that public record that's out there.

Once again, this is an assault on freedom of association by this Liberal government, and it is also an assault on our procedural integrity and our ability to safeguard the public interest through our procedures, our processes, through debate and reasonable interactions. As I mentioned during committee last week, if anybody watched that, they would be absolutely dumbfounded that on such an important bill they're willing to stifle and limit debate from the opposition. Not one member of the Liberal committee had an ounce of argument or justification to defend their assault on workplace democracy.

I don't know, Speaker. If I was to trade places, I would have resigned my seat as a Liberal member had I not been able to speak out and advocate and defend my constituents, to defend the rule of law. I would not accept the tyranny of the Premier's office. I would not accept

the muzzling by the leader's office. I would stand my ground and I would be proud to defend my constituents, unlike these Liberal members.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Is everybody paying attention? Second call for further debate. Third call for further debate.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated December 8, 2015, I'm now required to put the question.

Mr. Flynn has moved third reading of Bill 109, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): This will be deferred till tomorrow after question period, pursuant to standing order 28(h).

Third reading vote deferred.

WEARING OF MÉTIS NATION SYMBOL

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Hon. David Zimmer: Point of order: Speaker, I'm seeking unanimous consent that I can wear a Métis symbol as I will shortly be introducing and speaking to Bill 155, which deals with the Métis Nation of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs has asked for unanimous consent to wear a symbol of the Métis Nation. Do we agree? Agreed.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, I believe that you'll find we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion regarding private bills.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Minister without Portfolio is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion. Is there consent? Agreed.

Minister?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move that the orders for second and third reading of the following private bills shall be called consecutively and the questions on the motions for second and third reading of the bills put immediately without debate:

Bill Pr23, An Act to revive 422504 Ontario Ltd.;

Bill Pr24, An Act to revive The Gage Research Institute;

Bill Pr25, An Act to revive Zara H.S.L.C.C. Inc.;

Bill Pr26, An Act to revive 1170517 Ontario Inc.;

Bill Pr27, An Act to revive Larry Blake Limited;

Bill Pr28, An Act to revive Bayview Farms and Enterprises Limited;

Bill Pr29, An Act to revive 563523 Ontario Limited;

Bill Pr30, An Act to revive 1064514 Ontario Inc.; and

Bill Pr31, An Act to revive Precision Pipe Manufacturing Inc.; and

That Ms. Armstrong may move the motions for second and third reading of Bill Pr23 on behalf of Mme G  linas; Mme Lalonde may move the motions for second and third reading of Bill Pr25 on behalf of Mr. Takhar; Mr. Yakabuski may move the motions for second and third reading for Bills Pr27, Pr29 and Pr30 on behalf of Mrs. Martow; and Mr. Yakabuski may move the motions for second and third reading of Bill Pr28 on behalf of Ms. Thompson.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Bradley moves that the orders for second and third reading—

Hon. James J. Bradley: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Dispense? Agreed? Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

422504 ONTARIO LTD. ACT, 2015

Ms. Armstrong, on behalf of Mme G  linas, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr23, An Act to revive 422504 Ontario Ltd.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Ms. Armstrong has moved second reading of Bill Pr23, An Act to revive 422504 Ontario Ltd. Do we agree? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

422504 ONTARIO LTD. ACT, 2015

Ms. Armstrong, on behalf of Mme G  linas, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr23, An Act to revive 422504 Ontario Ltd.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Ms. Armstrong has moved third reading of Bill Pr23, An Act to revive 422504 Ontario Ltd. Do we agree? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

THE GAGE RESEARCH INSTITUTE ACT, 2015

Mr. Dong moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr24, An Act to revive The Gage Research Institute.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Dong has moved second reading of Bill Pr24, An Act to revive The Gage Research Institute. Agreed? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

THE GAGE RESEARCH INSTITUTE ACT, 2015

Mr. Dong moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr24, An Act to revive The Gage Research Institute.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Dong has moved third reading of Bill Pr24, An Act to revive The Gage Research Institute. Agreed? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

ZARA H.S.L.C.C INC. ACT, 2015

Mrs. Lalonde, on behalf of Mr. Takhar, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr25, An Act to revive Zara H.S.L.C.C Inc.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mrs. Lalonde has moved second reading of Bill Pr25, An Act to revive Zara H.S.L.C.C Inc. Agreed? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

ZARA H.S.L.C.C INC. ACT, 2015

Mrs. Lalonde, on behalf of Mr. Takhar, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr25, An Act to revive Zara H.S.L.C.C Inc.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mrs. Lalonde has moved third reading of Bill Pr25, An Act to revive Zara H.S.L.C.C Inc. Agreed? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

1170517 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2015

Mr. Norm Miller moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr26, An Act to revive 1170517 Ontario Inc.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Miller has moved second reading of Pr26, An Act to revive 1170517 Ontario Inc. Do we agree? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

1170517 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2015

Mr. Norm Miller moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr26, An Act to revive 1170517 Ontario Inc.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Miller has moved third reading of Bill Pr26, An Act to revive 1170517 Ontario Inc. Do we agree? Carried.

Be it resolved the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

LARRY BLAKE LIMITED ACT, 2015

Mr. Yakabuski, on behalf of Mrs. Martow, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr27, An Act to revive Larry Blake Limited.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Yakabuski has moved second reading of Bill Pr27, An Act to revive Larry Blake Limited. Agreed? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

LARRY BLAKE LIMITED ACT, 2015

Mr. Yakabuski, on behalf of Mrs. Martow, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr27, An Act to revive Larry Blake Limited.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Yakabuski has moved third reading of Bill Pr27, An Act to revive Larry Blake Limited. Agreed? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

BAYVIEW FARMS AND ENTERPRISES LIMITED ACT, 2015

Mr. Yakabuski, on behalf of Ms. Thompson, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr28, An Act to revive Bayview Farms and Enterprises Limited.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Yakabuski has moved Bill Pr28, An Act to revive Bayview Farms and Enterprises Limited. Agreed? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

BAYVIEW FARMS AND ENTERPRISES LIMITED ACT, 2015

Mr. Yakabuski, on behalf of Ms. Thompson, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr28, An Act to revive Bayview Farms and Enterprises Limited.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Yakabuski has moved third reading of Bill Pr28, An Act to revive Bayview Farms and Enterprises Limited. Agreed? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

563523 ONTARIO LIMITED ACT, 2015

Mr. Yakabuski, on behalf of Mrs. Martow, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr29, An Act to revive 563523 Ontario Limited.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Yakabuski has moved second reading of Bill Pr29, An Act to revive 563523 Ontario Limited. Agreed? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

563523 ONTARIO LIMITED ACT, 2015

Mr. Yakabuski, on behalf of Mrs. Martow, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr29, An Act to revive 563523 Ontario Limited.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Yakabuski has moved third reading of Bill Pr29, An Act to revive 563523 Ontario Limited. Agreed? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

1064514 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2015

Mr. Yakabuski, on behalf of Mrs. Martow, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr30, An Act to revive 1064514 Ontario Inc.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Yakabuski has moved second reading of Bill Pr30, An Act to revive 1064514 Ontario Inc. Agreed? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

1064514 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2015

Mr. Yakabuski, on behalf of Mrs. Martow, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr30, An Act to revive 1064514 Ontario Inc.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Yakabuski has moved third reading of Bill Pr30, An Act to revive 1064514 Ontario Inc. Agreed? Carried.

Be it resolved that this bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

PRECISION PIPE MANUFACTURING INC. ACT, 2015

Mr. Thibeault moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr31, An Act to revive Precision Pipe Manufacturing Inc.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Thibeault has moved second reading of Bill Pr31, An Act to revive Precision Pipe Manufacturing Inc. Agreed? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

PRECISION PIPE MANUFACTURING INC. ACT, 2015

Mr. Thibeault moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr31, An Act to revive Precision Pipe Manufacturing Inc.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Thibeault has moved third reading of Bill Pr31, An Act to revive Precision Pipe Manufacturing Inc. Agreed? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Orders of the day.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order before orders of the day: I believe that you will find we have unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding Bill 153, An Act to recognize the corporate structure of the Métis Nation of Ontario by enacting the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act, 2015.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Is there unanimous consent for this motion? Agreed? Carried.

Hon. James J. Bradley: It reads as follows:

That when the order for second reading of Bill 153, An Act to recognize the corporate structure of the Métis Nation of Ontario by enacting the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act, 2015, is called, one hour shall be allotted to the debate on the motion for second reading of the bill, divided equally among the recognized parties, at the end of which time the Speaker shall put the question without further debate or amendment; and

That the order for third reading of the bill shall then immediately be called, and the question put on the motion for third reading without debate or amendment; and that the votes on second and third readings may not be deferred, pursuant to standing order 28(h).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Agreed? Agreed. This will be deferred, I am imagining. I believe you'll—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Bradley has moved—dispense? Agreed? Thank you.

Motion agreed to.

MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO
SECRETARIAT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE SECRÉTARIAT
DE LA NATION MÉTISSE DE L'ONTARIO

Hon. David Zimmer, on behalf of Mr. Oraziotti, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 153, An Act to recognize the corporate structure of the Métis Nation of Ontario by enacting the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act, 2015 / Projet de loi 153, Loi visant à reconnaître la structure juridique de la nation métisse de l'Ontario par l'édiction de la Loi de 2015 sur le Secrétariat de la nation métisse de l'Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs has moved Bill 153. The minister now has the floor.

1700

Hon. David Zimmer: Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge Toronto as a sacred gathering place for many indigenous peoples of Turtle Island, and I want to recognize the long history of First Nations, Métis people and Inuit in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, we begin our remarks in this way to show respect and to honour the relationships we have

with indigenous peoples. It is a part of rebuilding—or, in some cases, building from the very start—strong partnerships.

I say that because these strong partnerships are vital to what we are speaking of today. Our government is committed to partnerships. One way we demonstrate that is through the Premier's annual meetings with our indigenous partners. Last year, Premier Wynne and I met with the Métis Nation of Ontario. At that meeting, our Premier committed to exploring the development of legislation to address the unique corporate structure of the Métis Nation of Ontario.

I am pleased that legislation has been introduced to fulfill that commitment in the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act, 2015. This bill demonstrates our government's willingness to be responsive to our indigenous partners, as well as our commitment to strengthen and improve our relationship with the Métis Nation of Ontario.

As you know, Speaker, we recently observed Louis Riel Day, a significant occasion for Métis people. I was proud to stand with the Métis Nation of Ontario to celebrate not only Louis Riel's contributions, but the contributions of the Métis Nation to Ontario's past, present and future. It is important that we acknowledge Louis Riel's contribution to building Canada, and that we recognize and respect the history, culture and identity of Métis people.

Ontario is lucky to have a vibrant Métis culture and language that value and celebrate diversity, and I am pleased that the Métis in Ontario are increasingly succeeding and playing a significant role in our economy and in the fabric of this great province.

The Métis Nation of Ontario has built a province-wide corporate structure to represent its over 18,000 citizens. The Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act would, if passed, promote strong accountability, transparency and democratic processes for the Métis Nation of Ontario, which, they have informed us, are priorities for the organization.

I want to tell you a little bit more about why this legislation is important, Speaker. First off, I want to note that we worked in partnership with the Métis Nation of Ontario during the development of this legislation. The secretariat is the corporate and administrative arm of the Métis Nation. It was incorporated to help facilitate the Métis Nation of Ontario in representing and advocating on behalf of its citizens and their communities.

It is the secretariat's unique democratic governance structure that has created the need for this legislation. Its operational realities have made it distinct from other Ontario not-for-profit corporations.

What would the legislation mean for MNO? This proposed legislation would recognize MNO's unique corporate structure within existing provincial corporate law. It would promote stronger accountability within the secretariat by providing tailored variations to existing corporate law. The overarching provincial corporate framework would still apply.

I am confident that, if passed, this legislation would truly have a positive impact on the corporate functioning of the secretariat. Let me give you some examples.

The legislation would support MNO's democratic practice of electing its directors, or councillors, through province-wide ballot box elections. It would provide a framework for incorporating the local arms of the secretariat, the Métis community councils, as subsidiaries subject to the proposed legislation. It would help ensure corporate consistency in administrative and financial matters. The MNO would maintain its current authority to determine its internal business, such as citizenship criteria and the representation of its citizens.

In fulfilling this commitment to MNO by bringing forward this legislation, it builds on recent efforts to strengthen our relationship with the Métis Nation of Ontario, an important indigenous partner. Mr. Speaker, I want to tell our members about some of those efforts.

Our relationship is represented by the framework agreement with the Métis Nation of Ontario. Last year, we renewed our five-year framework agreement, underscoring our continued commitment to work in partnership. That agreement helps facilitate the recognition and advancement of Métis people in Ontario.

Economic development is one of those key priorities for our work with MNO. That's why Ontario is providing up to \$30 million over 10 years to the Métis Voyageur Development Fund. The fund is contributing to prosperity through strategic investments in Métis businesses and entrepreneurs in the resource sector. We have recently seen a significant return on our investment in this fund. Let me give you some numbers: 82 jobs created and an additional 81 maintained, and \$8.5 million leveraged from other lenders. This shows that we are making smart, strategic investments that are helping Métis entrepreneurs and businesses in resource-based industries succeed. Through our Aboriginal Economic Development Fund, we've opened up opportunities to support non-resourced sector businesses by providing \$2.5 million.

Another initiative is Ontario's New Relationship Fund. Since 2008, it has provided capacity-building to support Métis Nation of Ontario's engagement with government and industry on lands and resource matters. Let me give you another example of its success: The Métis Nation has developed an institutional approach to engaging industry and government on lands and resource consultations that has successfully generated nine impact benefit agreements. These are nine agreements that have been completed or are in progress.

We also support the collaboration of the Métis Nation of Ontario with other organizations such as the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres and the Ontario Native Women's Association through urban indigenous issues. Their shared vision and efforts are advancing programs and service delivery, impacting the lives of urban and off-reserve indigenous peoples. Ontario's Aboriginal Education Strategy, led by the Ministry of Education, is helping to improve opportunities for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students, whether they live in remote areas or urban areas.

At the same time, the strategy is increasing the knowledge and awareness of all students about indigenous history, culture and perspectives. I remind members and guests of the initiatives and success stories because our government has a history of working together with the Métis Nation. We are committed to supporting the Métis Nation's efforts and we are so proud of the collaboration and accomplishments of this year alone.

Why is this proposal coming forward now? Over the course of the recent modernization of the legal framework governing Ontario's not-for-profits, MNO has actively requested changes to accommodate their unique corporate structure, resolve inconsistencies and enhance accountability. It was at the Premier's annual meeting last year when MNO reiterated its request in this regard. As I previously said, the Premier committed to explore the development of a statute with a view to introducing this legislation.

The Ministry of Government and Consumer Services and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs have worked closely with the Métis Nation of Ontario to inform the development of the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act. MNO received support at its 2015 annual general assembly to move forward with this legislation.

It is important that our members know that this legislation is not intended to recognize MNO as the sole representative body for Métis in Ontario, nor is it intended to address Métis constitutional rights or self-government. Rather, this is about our government being responsive to MNO's long-standing request for corporate legislation and strengthening the province's relationship with MNO.

In summary, if passed, the legislation will recognize the unique democratic nature of MNO's secretariat structure and allow it to operate more effectively under the Corporations Act and the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010, when it comes into force.

In conclusion, Speaker and members of this House, today when I speak of all the activities we've seen, I remind you that initiatives like this are helping to achieve reconciliation among Métis, First Nations and Inuit people and other non-indigenous peoples throughout the province. The Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act is a step on that path.

Before I sit down, I would like to introduce some guests in the Speaker's gallery from the Métis Nation of Ontario: Gary Lipinski, the president; France Picotte; Margaret Froh; Joanne Myers; and Marc St. Germain. They have been most helpful in developing this legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Welcome to our guests.

Further debate?

1710

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure to have the opportunity to speak to Bill 153, the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act, 2015.

Let me begin by welcoming President Gary Lipinski, Chair France Picotte, MNO staff Joanne Meyer and MNO staff Margaret Froh to the Speaker's gallery in the

Legislature. Welcome; it's nice to have you here today for this important debate on this bill.

One of the first events that the new leader of the Progressive Conservative Party attended this past summer was the annual general assembly of the Métis Nation of Ontario that was held this year in Midland, Ontario. So Patrick Brown, our newly minted leader, attended that event, and I know he's met with the Métis Nation of Ontario, and he's offered support for the passage of this bill. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to be there this year, only because it happened to be exactly the time that I was on my annual canoe trip. I was on the west branch of the Spanish River—that's my excuse for not being there this year. I was definitely out of cellphone contact. But the annual assembly has been held in Parry Sound in the past, and I was pleased to attend the year that it was in Parry Sound.

This bill would recognize the unique governance structure of the Métis Nation of Ontario. To give a little bit of history, the Métis Nation of Ontario was initially incorporated back about 1994 under the Ontario Corporations Act.

This new bill is something that's been requested by the Métis Nation of Ontario at their annual general assemblies. They've passed resolutions—I don't know whether that's the correct terminology—in support of this. Certainly, I have received many, many different letters from Métis Nation citizens and from pretty much every regional council around the province: Greenstone Métis council; Great Lakes Métis council; Niagara regional council; the all-important Moon River Métis council, which happens to be in Parry Sound–Muskoka; the Toronto and York region Métis council; the Grand River Métis council; the Superior North Shore Métis council; the Mattawa Métis council; the North Channel Métis council; the Kenora Métis council; the Sault Ste. Marie Métis council; and also many different senators and citizens have written to the Premier—on which I've been c.c.'d—in support of this.

I received many, but I'll read one that I just received today from a citizen so that you get the gist of it:

"As a citizen of the Métis Nation of Ontario, I support the passage of Bill 153, the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act that was introduced into the Ontario Legislature on December 1, 2015.

"This bill has been developed in collaboration with the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) and is a positive step forward in advancing reconciliation for the Métis in Ontario. This legislation will finally recognize the MNO's unique governance structures at the local, regional and provincial levels, and will respect our democratic election processes.

"At the MNO's annual general assembly held in August 2015, our citizens unanimously passed a resolution fully endorsing the MNO moving forward on securing provincial legislation that recognizes and respects the MNO's unique governance structure. Bill 153 does just that and, when passed, will represent the fulfillment of this 2015 AGA resolution and the wishes of MNO citizens.

"We urge you to move forward in passing Bill 153 so that our concerns with current and future Ontario legislation dealing with corporations and not-for-profit corporations won't negatively impact the MNO's governance structures."

I understand that if this bill wasn't passed, then—as I mentioned, the MNO was incorporated in 1994 under the Corporations Act—but, if the new Not-For-Profit Corporations Act kicked in, then the rules regulating not-for-profit corporations don't line up with the very democratic structure of the Métis Nation of Ontario. For example, if this bill didn't pass, then the Not-For-Profit Corporations Act requires annual election of directors, and it would allow anyone to run. In this bill, they're not called directors; they're councillors. They have four-year terms, not one-year terms. Only recognized citizens of the Métis Nation of Ontario can run for office. Only citizens can vote.

I met recently with our guests who are visiting today—Gary Lipinski, France Picotte, Joanne Meyer and Margaret Froh—to ask questions about this bill and about their governance structure. It is very democratic. I have to say, I like the way they have things organized in their community councils and also with the executive, with senators, with regional councillors. I especially like the fact that they have a post-secondary representative and a youth representative. In fact, they have an election coming up next May.

For anyone interested, they have a very informative website, with video responses to questions specifically on this bill, and also lots of information, questions and answers for people who might have questions about the bill. It does a really good job of explaining and answering all the various questions.

I and our party support this. We look forward to it passing and happening fairly quickly.

I would just, in getting ready to close, say that it's been my pleasure as the aboriginal affairs critic for many years to attend the annual Louis Riel Day event that happens here at Queen's Park. I always enjoy going to that. There's usually a feast involved, so I get well fed as well, normally. Also, I have for many years attended the Moon River Métis annual meeting. It's usually held over in MacTier, and there's usually a fish fry that's involved with that as well, and usually some good pickerel that happens at that.

Mr. Todd Smith: Normie likes to eat.

Mr. Norm Miller: That's not the only reason I go, Mr. Speaker, but it is an added bonus for being able to attend these events.

Anyway, we look forward to supporting this bill, and it's been my pleasure to have an opportunity to address it today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Before I move on, could I ask the members to sit in their seats, because it's very distracting when I'm going to the next person who's going to speak. If they want to deliver their mail, try and be cautious about it.

Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: First, I would like to ask for the indulgence of the House and ask for unanimous consent to wear my mini ceinture fléchée. Can I do that, Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I believe that we have consent—that's a new one? The member from Nickel Belt has asked if she can wear the representation of—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Agreed? Agreed.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Speaker. I will be sharing part of my time with my colleague from Timmins—James Bay, as well as part of my time with my colleague from Bramalea—Gore—Malton.

I'd like to start by welcoming Gary Lipinski, the president of the Métis Nation of Ontario; ma bonne amie France Picotte, the chair of the Métis Nation of Ontario; Joanne Meyer, the director of intergovernmental affairs; Margaret Froh, the associate chief operating officer; and I understand Marc is there, too. Welcome to Queen's Park. Bienvenue.

I know that when you first came to Queen's Park, you wanted your bill to have first, second and third reading all on the same day. I'm thankful that you agreed to the change, because I really wanted to give this House an opportunity to put a few words on the record regarding the Métis Nation of Ontario.

There has never been a bill for the Métis Nation of Ontario in this House before. The last time we talked about the Métis Nation in this House, it was because we wanted Louis Riel to be hanged. I think it's quite fitting that, today, we are talking about a celebration. We are talking about a victory. We are talking about something really positive that the Métis Nation of Ontario has wanted for a long time, and that is happening right here, right now.

Le mot « Métis » comes in part du mot français « mêler ». En français, on dit tissé serré ou mêlé.

In French or in English, it is called Métis. It expresses this idea of a mixture and, to me, this really is appropriate for what the Métis are.

1720

I'd like to quote Louis Riel from 1885, when he said, "Why should we care to what degree exactly of mixture we possess European blood and Indian blood? If we feel ever so little gratitude and filial love toward one or the other, do they not constrain us to say"—and this is in capital letters—"WE ARE MÉTIS!"

This is from Louis Riel. I think this man was a visionary because, in 2015, it still describes exactly what the Métis Nation, what was called the Métis race, is all about.

The Métis are people of the land, which gives rise to their history, their tradition, their culture and their language. They say those lands are the Métis homelands, and those homelands are huge. They stretch from the lakes and rivers of Ontario all the way across the prairies of Canada, traverse the mountains of British Columbia and reach into the northern territories of our beautiful

country. They include the hills and the valleys in the north-central American states.

As Métis who live in the homelands, they hold it to be a functional truth that the Métis are one of the aboriginal people of America. Those words, Speaker, are very important because they talk to their rights; they talk to who they are as a nation. They are very proud of their rich heritage, and they are inspired by the values and the traditions of their ancestors. The strengths of the Métis society are based on democracy, freedom, fairness, equality, generosity and justice. But above all, the Métis people cherish harmony and peace. It's pretty hard to argue with this, Speaker, pretty hard.

I want to come back and talk a little bit about Louis Riel. When we talk about the Métis Nation and Métis people, most people associate—if they know of them at all, because lots of people don't even know they exist, Speaker. That is why it is so important that today we have an opportunity to put a few words on the record so that people know they do exist as a people; they exist as a nation.

When we talk about Louis Riel, he was a leader for his people and he is the one who led the resistance against the Canadian government in the Canadian northwest. He was a young, ambitious, well-educated and passionate bilingual man.

Riel quietly emerged as a leader among the Métis of the Red River in Manitoba. In 1969 and 1970, he headed a provisional government—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: In 1869.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Sorry. In 1869 and 1870—thank you to my colleague—he headed a provisional government which would eventually negotiate the Manitoba Act with the Canadian government. This is the act that actually established the province of Manitoba, and he made sure that it provided some protection for French language rights.

This is something that we can all learn from. Here in Ontario, we have a rather bleak past when it comes to the rights of the French-speaking people. Everybody will remember regulation 17, which forbade people in Ontario to be taught in their mother tongue, to be taught in French, and that went on for years. We still, to this day, carry the baggage. Louis Riel was way ahead of his time. He made sure that not only was he creating a new province for Canada, but he was enshrining the rights of the francophone population.

In 1884, Louis Riel was asked by a delegation of the community of Métis from the south branch of the Saskatchewan River to present their grievances to the Canadian government. He was to be the messenger. Despite Riel's assistance, the federal government ignored the concerns of the Métis people. By March 1885, Métis patience was exhausted and a provisional government was declared. Riel was the undisputed spiritual and political head of the short-lived rebellion of 1885.

On May 15 of that year, shortly after the fall of Batoche, Riel surrendered to the Canadian forces and was taken to Regina to stand trial for treason. He was sentenced to death, and numerous appeals were dis-

missed by the people around him. He was hanged in Regina on November 16, 1885.

This is a date that we now celebrate every year. It is sort of sad that we are celebrating the death of a leader, but at the same time the Métis people grew and got stronger by the fact that the values that this man had brought forward, the ideals that he was working for are ideals that we all now share and respect. His execution was widely opposed and, to this day, it is still opposed.

So how does somebody identify themselves as Métis? I know, Speaker, that you are Métis, and I thank you for sharing that with us during many ceremonies. Basically, Métis are people of mixed blood. They are a mix of European and aboriginal blood who are distinct. They are not First Nation, as an Indian, they are not Inuit under the laws of Canada, but they have ties to aboriginal ancestry. Basically, anybody, from the day you are one day old, right after you are born, can apply to be recognized for your Métis status.

Anyone who has self-identified as Métis, has community acceptance as Métis, is not registered as an Indian or an Inuit and has clear aboriginal blood ties can prove their aboriginal ancestry. You have to prove this, and there are a number of ways you can do this: through genealogical documentation, letters from Indian Affairs, a photocopy of aboriginal birth, a photocopy of your ancestor's Indian status card, land records or transcript records. There are some historical documents that exist that show your bloodlines, a letter from an elder in your community, but you have to realize that it is a bloodline. So if you yourself are from European descent and you marry somebody who is of First Nation descent, that does not make you Métis. There is no Métis by marriage or anything like that. It has to be by bloodline. Basically, you have to prove that you have this mix of First Nation—Indian—and European blood.

How it first happened is quite simple. Through the Hudson's Bay Company that was taking hold in many, many different places of our country when our country was just in its infancy, it was only men who were coming over. They married and had children with the First Nations people, who were called Indians at the time, and they became Métis. The percentage of one blood or the other has no bearing on the fact that you are Métis.

Louis Riel and the Métis people are really, I would say, inclusive. If you are of mixed blood and you can prove it, you are welcome, which means that, in Ontario, over 80,000 people have proven their ancestry, their bloodlines, and are Métis. Over 20,000 of them belong to MNO, the Métis Nation of Ontario.

1730

I wanted to put a few notes on the record, but I see that the time is really going fast.

The Métis Nation does all sorts of activities to really show what they stand for. One of my favourite ones was the canoe expedition where, from May 26 until August 22, 2014, eight young Métis went across the province, from Ottawa all the way to Thunder Bay. They canoed over 2,000 kilometres. My hands hurt from the blisters they must have had to canoe 2,000 kilometres, but they

did it, and they really did it to show their ancestry. We all know les coureurs des bois—many of them were Métis—would use canoes to go from one area of our province to the next. This is one of the activities, but they have many, many others.

Today, with this bill, we are saying, "You are there. You exist. We welcome you. We recognize you. We hope that you build on your past and the strength of your present, and that you will be there for a long, long time to come."

Thank you for being here today, and thank you for allowing us to put a few words on the record.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

M. Gilles Bisson: C'est avec fierté que j'ai la chance de dire une couple de mots sur ce débat faisant affaire avec ce projet de loi. Comme ma collègue a dit, la dernière fois qu'on a eu des discussions dans cette Assemblée faisant affaire avec les Métis d'une manière sérieuse—c'est très triste—c'était un temps, franchement, où on a fait des affaires dont on n'est pas fier même aujourd'hui, faisant affaire avec M. Riel.

Mais ce qu'on a appris dans cette province, c'est ce que les Métis nous ont montré : à la fin de la journée, c'est l'amour et de s'accepter chacun et chacune comme faisant partie de cette province. Si tu es Métis, francophone, anglophone, Indien ou autrement, on a tous une place dans cette province. Tout ce que les Métis ont jamais demandé, c'est qu'ils soient reconnus comme un peuple dans cette province.

Dans mon comté de Timmins-Baie James, où il y a beaucoup de monde qui demeurent là qui font partie de la nation des Métis, je peux dire qu'aujourd'hui est une journée avec une certaine fierté parce que, finalement, on est capable de concrétiser dans la législation comment cette organisation-là, ce peuple des Métis, va se gouverner quand ça vient à leur propre assemblée pour représenter leur monde.

Donc, ce qu'on fait aujourd'hui c'est concrétiser ce qui a toujours été le cas : les Métis sont là, ils sont une nation et ils sont là pour être capables de travailler de la part de leur peuple. Aujourd'hui, on est en train de reconnaître une fois—c'est bien beau à dire—depuis très longtemps qu'on va être capable de concrétiser ce fait.

L'autre affaire que je veux dire : j'ai trouvé que c'était une très bonne suggestion de la part de M^{me} Gélinas de me demander, comme chef parlementaire, d'avoir un débat aujourd'hui et pas rien que de passer le projet de loi—première, deuxième et troisième lecture.

Je veux remercier le gouvernement et remercier le parti d'opposition des conservateurs, qui ont accepté qu'on ait un petit débat aujourd'hui pour être capable de reconnaître ce qu'on fait aujourd'hui en concrétisant ce qui est déjà là dans la législation. Je veux aussi remercier la Nation Métis d'avoir compris que nous, on ne voulait pas passer un projet de loi sans que le projet de loi soit directement dans l'Assemblée, parce que des fois, quand un projet de loi est écrit, ce qui arrive ici à l'Assemblée peut être différent : le gouvernement nous a donné le projet de loi pour être capable d'avoir une vue de cette loi

avant, mais ils ont introduit un projet de loi qui était exactement l'autre.

So, donc, c'est le processus. Je suis fier aujourd'hui, comme tous les députés de cette Assemblée, de faire ce qui est bien et juste pour les Métis de cette province. On dit un gros merci à tout le monde ici. Félicitations, et continue la belle ouvrage.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Merci beaucoup. Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'm so incredibly honoured to stand today to add my voice to the debate on this topic.

It's a well-established principle in international law that each nation should have the right to choose how they should be sovereignly ruled. They have that right to determine their own existence, to determine their own governance. That is a fundamental right, and I'm so honoured that the Métis Nation, which has suffered so much injustice in this country and in this province, a community that has faced genocide, that has faced oppression, that has faced discrimination, that has faced such terrible obstacles, today, on this momentous occasion, is now able to look back on that terrible history and say with pride, "We have now achieved such a momentous result today." It is truly something that invigorates me and gives me so much honour and such pride to stand here today to support the Métis Nation.

The Métis Nation is, in fact, a nation of people. It is a nation of people that now is moving towards stronger established governance. The previous system did not incorporate the true realities of this community. I'm so honoured that now we're able to more accurately represent this community in such a meaningful way. It is truly such a great honour. I don't have the words to express how proud I am today.

Self-governance is an important step in order to also work towards reconciliation. The harms that were suffered require two things. First, if any community suffers a harm, the first step is to recognize that harm was suffered. That first step is to acknowledge that First Nations people, that the Métis Nation, were oppressed by Canada, were oppressed in this country. The first step is to recognize that.

The second step, Mr. Speaker, is to provide a solution. The permanent solution is to ensure that the Métis Nation has the sovereign ability to self-govern, and that's what Bill 153 is about: to entrench that fundamental principle that, once we acknowledge the harm that was done, the second step is to ensure that there is a solution to the problem, and that is to ensure that the sovereign rights of this Métis Nation are recognized, and I'm so honoured that this is going on today.

One of the fundamental things about recognizing the sovereign rights of self-governance is ensuring that there are democratic structures, that there's nation-building, that governance structures are in place, and that's what this bill will ensure happens.

I want to take a side note to acknowledge the fact that the Métis Nation has taken particular attention to encouraging youth to be involved in governance, which

is very progressive and forward-thinking. Truly, I'm honoured that they've included that in this bill. It's something that we should all look towards as a model, the fact that they're working so hard to incorporate their youth. That's the way of the future.

I salute you, I acknowledge you and I thank you for your great work.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

First, let me thank the Acting Speaker from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek for allowing me to sit in the chair in this special moment for me. I appreciate the Speaker for allowing me to do that.

Next, I have to do some business. But before I do, I just want to say: This has helped me, and I thank you. I thank the leadership of the Métis Nation for embracing me and I appreciate it very much.

Mr. Zimmer has moved second reading of Bill 153, An Act to recognize the corporate structure of the Métis Nation of Ontario by enacting the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act, 2015. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO

SECRETARIAT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE SECRÉTARIAT

DE LA NATION MÉTISSE DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Zimmer, on behalf of Mr. Oraziotti, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 153, An Act to recognize the corporate structure of the Métis Nation of Ontario by enacting the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act, 2015 / Projet de loi 153, Loi visant à reconnaître la structure juridique de la nation métisse de l'Ontario par l'édiction de la Loi de 2015 sur le Secrétariat de la nation métisse de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Zimmer has moved third reading of Bill 153, An Act to recognize the corporate structure of the Métis Nation of Ontario by enacting the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act, 2015. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Orders of the day?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The deputy House leader has moved adjournment of the House. Do we agree? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

This House does now stand adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1740.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough–Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiles, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough–Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
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Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
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Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	Whitby–Oshawa	

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Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo
Han Dong, Michael Harris
Sophie Kiwala, Todd Smith
Monique Taylor
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Toby Barrett, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Ann Hoggarth
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky
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John Fraser, Wayne Gates
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Cristina Martins, Randy Pettapiece
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przedziecki

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Randy Hillier, Michael Mantha
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Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri
Laurie Scott
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon
Chris Ballard, Steve Clark
Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha
Eleanor McMahon, Monte McNaughton
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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des comptes publics**

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Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Jennifer K. French
Monte Kwinter, Amrit Mangat
Kathryn McGarry, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon
Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow
Kathryn McGarry, Norm Miller
Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns
Glenn Thibeault
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment /
Comité spécial de la violence et du harcèlement à caractère
sexuel**

Chair / Présidente: Daiene Vernile
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Han Dong, Sylvia Jones
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Kathryn McGarry, Eleanor McMahon
Taras Natyshak, Peggy Sattler
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First Session, 41st Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 41^e législature

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Thursday 10 December 2015

Jeudi 10 décembre 2015



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Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 10 December 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 10 décembre 2015

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUDGET MEASURES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 9, 2015, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 144, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact or amend certain other statutes / *Projet de loi 144, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter ou à modifier d'autres lois.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to be able to have this opportunity to voice my concerns on Bill 144, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact or amend certain other statutes. I was scheduled to speak at the time of second reading of this bill but, at that point, it was referred to committee. I think that in my brief comments that I have time for this morning, I want to concentrate on the nature and the situation of the passage of this bill, given its length and complexity.

The bill was referred to committee and the second reading was shortened. Unfortunately, the government shut down debate on this bill and rushed it through committee with only six hours of public hearings.

As I say, I want to spend the brief time I have to look at some of the issues around it. Just to give people an idea of why the mechanics of the bill are important to recognize: Bill 144 is a 167-page bill; it looks like this, at 167 pages. It is really quite a lengthy, in-depth document. It's to implement budget measures after the budget itself passed back in June. On November 18, the Minister of Finance spoke for only 16 minutes, and by November 30 there was the introduction of a time allocation motion. It identified that this bill would be passed, by the process we are undertaking right now, December 10, as the end of third reading. So it had the opportunity, three weeks of opportunity, for the government to allow for debate on this bill.

I want to put that in the context of a bill such as Bill 9, Ending Coal for Cleaner Air Act. It was introduced on July 9, 2014, and it was passed November 23, 2015, 72

weeks after its introduction, almost a year and a half. What's interesting about that is that it wasn't that it was a contentious bill; in fact, the opposite. It wasn't that it was so lengthy or detailed or complex, but, rather, it was an opportunity for the government to use it as a photo op. There was no opposition to the bill, so it could have passed within weeks or months of its introduction.

It's an interesting example of the fact that in the 2003 election, we had already begun the decommissioning of a coal-fired plant. As the government, we promised in that election to be coal-free by 2014. But the Liberals told people in their election promises that it would be done by 2007—an unrealistic promise, obviously, broken by the Liberals. What we actually experienced was that in fact, the coal plants had closed by 2014.

So I just give that as a contrast to a bill such as Bill 144 and its complexity, and the speed with which it is being put forward in this Legislature.

This bill, Bill 144, would implement measures contained in the 2015 budget, enact five new statutes, and amend other statutes. It has 23 schedules. The issue is that it covers many different situations and issues. I'm just going to identify a few in the moments that I have, to be able to give people a sense of the complexity of this bill, and contrasting that with the speed with which this has made it through to third reading today.

I referenced a moment ago that there are 23 schedules, and each one of them could be, in itself, a bill. They deal with things as diverse as the Assessment Act; the City of Toronto Act; the Electricity Act, which deals with the debt retirement charge for commercial and industrial users; the Financial Administration Act, and the question of a transfer for payments for businesses; the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act—under it, the Ontario Economic Forecast Council is dissolved, so the Ministry of Finance will continue to consult but with their own experts and at their own discretion; the Government Advertising Act, for an error in the French translation.

But the one that's probably going to affect the greatest number of people is the Horse Racing Licence Act. Here, there are many significant changes, including dissolving the Ontario Racing Commission. This means that it will be transferred to the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario through the registrar. This will then make rules for horse racing, racetracks and off-track betting facilities in Ontario, and enables the registrar to issue, suspend and revoke licences for jockeys, trainers, grooms and other horse racing professionals.

Much has been said in this House on the issue of horse racing in this province. What it boils down to is 55,000 jobs that are in that sector. The notion that it can be relegated to the kind of short shrift it is getting through this process is something that people should understand.

0910

In the moment that is left to me, I want to tell you about the consultation process. Witnesses were to appear before the committee on Tuesday, December 1, each witness to receive five minutes. The deadline for written submissions was Thursday, December 3, and on Monday, December 7, the amendments which "have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary...."

What this meant was that we sat in the committee room and simply deemed that the discussion and amendments had been dealt with, and we would consider this now at third reading. So here we are with Bill 144, squeezed through the process to accommodate the government.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

M^{me} France G  linas: It is my pleasure, this morning, to add a few comments on the record regarding Bill 144, the budget bill. The first thing I want to put on the record: I will quote from a letter from Jennifer Clement, a nurse practitioner from my riding who is the director of the very first nurse practitioner-led clinic. I'm very proud that the very first nurse practitioner-led clinic was in Sudbury. It is a great place. They do great work. They look after thousands of people who did not have access to primary care before, and they do this in a way that is rated top-notch. Whenever they do a survey of their clients, it always comes out that clients love them, the system loves them and the clinic works.

But we have an issue—and I'll quote from Jennifer. She had discussed with me the problem the clinic had "recruiting a nurse practitioner for a vacant maternity leave position which has necessitated the entire team pitching in to cover that patient load and the strain it has placed on the team. We also discussed the fact that due to financial constraints, our budget has remained unchanged for over six years yet costs around us continue to rise due to cost-of-living increases."

Things have not improved. Throughout the system, one in five nurse practitioner positions in primary care is vacant. Why is that? It's because the government made a promise during the last election campaign. They promised that they were going to look at the salaries and compensation of nurse practitioners. Nurse practitioners working in primary care haven't seen a penny of change in their compensation for the last eight years. Yet, during those eight years, the scope of practice of nurse practitioners has changed dramatically.

You will remember, Speaker, that they used to prescribe from a list—I don't know who ever dreamed that up, but it certainly did not work. They now have open prescribing, and prescribe whatever is most appropriate,

except for narcotics. They never used to be able to look after a patient in the hospital; now they are often the primary providers of care in our hospitals. They work in our emergency rooms. They work in our CCACs. They work in our long-term-care homes.

But the problem is that as new positions were created in our hospitals, in the CCACs and in our long-term-care homes—those salaries were basically rolled out with an understanding that they should be paid more, given that the scope of practice and responsibility had increased. But the salaries of the ones in primary care, the ones who give us access to the rest of the health care system, have been frozen for eight years, and that's wrong. If you look through the different primary care models, whether it be community health centres, aboriginal health access centres, community-led nurse practitioner clinics or community family health teams, their salaries have not moved.

All of the primary care sector has been frozen. I highlighted nurse practitioners, but things are no better for dietitians. If you go through the health care system and you look at the number of vacant positions for a nutritionist or dietitian, it is really hard for an interdisciplinary team to do their work the way they're supposed to when they cannot recruit. Why is that, Speaker? It's because they have not seen a penny increase in one sector of the health care system, that is primary care—while the other sectors haven't seen a bonanza or anything like that; don't get me wrong. We're talking about a very modest increase. But over the eight-year period, those modest increases make a discrepancy of over tens of thousands of dollars sometimes between what you would get for Jennifer, who has been a nurse practitioner for the last eight years.

Had she stayed in her position at the hospital as a registered nurse, she would have better wages, she would have a good pension plan with HOOPP, and she would have a good set of benefits. She has chosen to go back to work, pay for her schooling, become a nurse practitioner, offer access to thousands of people who did not have access to primary care before by working in an underserved area, and yet how do we compensate her for that? Less than she would have made. This has to be changed. We have a budget coming, and those issues have to be addressed.

I'm not the only one saying this, Speaker. We have received—and I'm sure all of us have received—hundreds of emails. We've received letters from physicians. Dr. Lori Chalklin, Dr. Stephen Duncan, Dr. Alicia Gallaccio, Dr. Dana Pintea, Dr. Kim Walsh, Dr. David Wallik, Dr. Chris Williams—and the list goes on and on, Speaker—all say the same thing: that if you want primary care to do what it's meant to do, to offer access, to help with disease prevention and health promotion, to help people take charge of their own health, then you need to fund those teams in a way that allows them to do recruitment and retention of their highly capable staff. But none of this is happening in Bill 144, in the budget bill.

This week I had the opportunity to talk with the occupational therapists. They have put forward a very good

model that would make interdisciplinary rehab teams—so think physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, kinesiologists, and I am missing one that will come to me shortly—and make sure that those teams are available to people who live in long-term-care homes. The way the changes have been made to physiotherapy payments has wiped out access for the people in long-term care to an interdisciplinary rehab team. But they make such a big difference, Speaker. If you can give the patient in long-term care access to an interdisciplinary rehab team, people who need to be fed will be able to feed themselves because the occupational therapist will show them adaptations they can make so that they can hold their fork or their spoon and they can hold their bowl and feed themselves even if they are hemiplegic or had a stroke. They have a lifetime of knowledge and skills that help people stay as functional and independent as possible.

It's the same thing with—rather than having a two-person transfer, if the person can help themselves, you only need a one-person transfer. It's the same thing with toiletting, transferring in and out of the tub; it's the same thing with a number of activities of daily living that occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech-language pathologists certainly—you know, we look at how frustrating it is for people who cannot communicate what their needs are. If you can't communicate, no wonder you get angry and act out, and then they get overmedicated and we spend millions of dollars on anti-psychotic drugs for people who just need an opportunity to communicate.

0920

This is what speech-language pathologists do. They give people who cannot communicate an opportunity to say what they want, to be heard, to be understood. And all of a sudden, once you're able to communicate, the frustration goes away. The acting out goes away. The need for anti-psychotic medication—that was not needed in the first place—goes away—and the number of falls. They make a huge difference.

But yet again, we have a budget that has changed the way rehab dollars are allocated, in the worst possible format, so that none of those services are available to people living in long-term-care homes anymore, and that's wrong.

This budget bill had an opportunity to right this wrong, and it needs to be changed so that the funding model—we're not asking for more dollars here, Speaker. I want you to fully understand that. We're not asking for more dollars. We're asking for dollars that already flow, to be accessible in ways that are not accessible right now, so that it would change the level of activity, the level of independence, of tens of thousands of people in our long-term-care homes. But this budget bill does not allow us to do that.

I have to put a little bit on the record regarding the OMA and physician compensation. Speaker, nothing good comes from a unilateral agreement. Nothing good comes when you refuse to talk. What they're asking for is the same thing as every other workers' group. Yes, I

know that physicians are well compensated, and, yes, I know that they are part of the 10%. This is not what the discussion is about. The discussion is about a group of very important workers in our communities—physicians—being able to have an opportunity to negotiate an agreement—an agreement that nobody will like, but everybody will be able to live with.

This is wrong. The fact that the government won't let them have their say, won't let them have a chance to negotiate, is bringing all sorts of unrest into our health care system that is not good. I know the Minister of Health will be interested in changing that. He understands the importance of having a good and trusting relationship between the care providers and the patients. You do this by bringing forward respect. You do this by bringing forward opportunities to be heard and to settle things so that everybody has an agreement they can live with.

Speaker, I also have to bring forward that flatlining the budgets of our hospitals for year after year—we're looking at year five and year six—is causing a lot of hardship. Some of our bigger ones are still managing relatively okay, but most of our community hospitals are having a tough time. What has been happening is that anything that is not acute hospital care is being shifted into the community, where it has no oversight, where it has no accountability, where it has no transparency. We're not opposed to transferring care into the community where it makes sense, but we are opposed to having it done when there is no framework for transparency, accountability, and maintaining quality.

I have nothing but respect for the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. They're trying hard. But their mandate for out-of-hospital services is very narrow. To have this one agency that is supposed to be the guardian of quality care, of transparency, of accountability—this is not happening, Speaker. CPSO does a good job; they do a good job within their mandate.

But what we had before in our hospitals, with freedom of access of information, with Ombudsman oversight—which I hope will come pretty soon—with boards of directors, with being able to have a person or a department in place that looks at your complaint—all of this is gone.

I cannot FOI the out-of-hospital premises. I cannot be sure that there will be a person there who will handle a complaint if there is one. I certainly know that you cannot escalate this anywhere. There is no transparency; there is no accountability. This is wrong. It has to be fixed. This bill would allow us to make those kinds of changes because of the number of bills that it opens up, but it is not in there.

Another promise that was made through a budget—as you will remember, Speaker, when we were in a minority Parliament, we were able to negotiate a five-day wait time for people waiting for home care. We did not like many parts of what they had in their budget, but we agreed to support a Liberal budget on the promise that the tens of thousands of people who were waiting for

home care would receive it within five days. Well, the Auditor General told us the result of that. The result of that is that people wait 195 days before they get home care.

For children waiting for children's services, we're talking over two years for speech-language pathology, and over two years for occupational therapy and physiotherapy. For a kid who is two, three or four years old, this is half their life that they have spent on a wait-list to get the services they need. Those are opportunities lost. This is a promise that is being broken each and every day.

We have an opportunity with this budget bill to fix that, to say that there will be a commitment that nobody who needs home care will wait more than five days. Most people are being discharged from hospital with the promise that home care will follow. But if home care doesn't follow, their needs don't go away. It's not because they've been discharged from the hospital that a miracle has happened going through the threshold of those doors and all of a sudden all is fine. They were discharged with a promise of a care plan that included home care, which doesn't show up.

If it does finally come together, the number of missed visits, the number of missed appointments, the number of appointments that do not come when they're supposed to come—because if you're supposed to be getting home care to help you get out of bed in the morning and it's 3 o'clock in the afternoon before the PSW shows up, it is no good. If you're supposed to get somebody to help put you to bed at night but the PSW comes at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, it's still no good. This is what we're facing.

We have an opportunity to commit to a five-day wait time for home care. This was a commitment that was made through a budget. This was a commitment that was made very publicly. This is a commitment that is being broken each and every day for the tens of thousands of people who are waiting for home care.

There are other things that I wanted to talk about but I see that time is going away. Right now, we have a campaign led by our midwives that says that we don't need to put antibiotics in the eyes of newborns. There are very limited cases where this could help, but most of the time—99% of the time—we should not do this. If we stop doing this, as the best practice is telling us, we would save \$618,000 a year on medication that is not appropriate for newborns and should not be used.

The \$618,000 means that—remember the \$200,000 that the OPP is going to save by moving the helicopter from Sudbury to Orillia, putting the people of the north-east at risk each and every day? Lots of us like to go into the bush. Winter is coming. There will be snowshoeing, skiing, trappers and snowmobilers, and sometimes we get in trouble—and it's dark at 4 o'clock at night in my neck of the woods. This helicopter is going to be no good to us. Well, that \$618,000 would pay for that helicopter three times, because they're saving \$200,000.

There is lots of opportunity for saving. It is disappointing that it is not being acted upon and that the opportunity to make modifications to that bill is next to nil.

0930

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? Further debate? Last call for further debate.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 26, 2015, I'm now required to put the question.

Mr. Bradley has moved third reading of Bill 144, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact or amend certain other statutes. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote is being required. It will be deferred until after question period today.

Third reading vote deferred.

HEALTH INFORMATION PROTECTION ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION DES RENSEIGNEMENTS SUR LA SANTÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 3, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 119, An Act to amend the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, to make certain related amendments and to repeal and replace the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, 2004 / Projet de loi 119, Loi visant à modifier la Loi de 2004 sur la protection des renseignements personnels sur la santé, à apporter certaines modifications connexes et à abroger et à remplacer la Loi de 2004 sur la protection des renseignements sur la qualité des soins.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Speaker, I'm on my third day of my one-hour lead; it seems that we keep running out of time. But I'm sure today we'll be able to finish off the lead with regard to this bill.

I'll just go through what the bill will do. Basically, the bill will create an electronic health records system that will enable health information custodians to store and use a patient's health information over an electronic interface. This effortless exchange of health information is designed to improve patient care. It will become an integrated electronic system by creating the prescribed organization as an entity under this bill to manage personal health information in electronic format and to create and maintain an electronic health record. The prescribed organization is intended to become the hub of information.

Before I carry on with what the bill will consist of, seeing that I only have a few minutes left, I'll just raise some concerns that have come forward from some stakeholders, something that we can discuss further in debate and as we head into committee and see if we can either tighten up the rules or find a solution that will alleviate the concerns of the stakeholders and/or strengthen the bill.

The integration of electronic health records is a much-needed step forward, but there are a few concerns. Many stakeholders will use the system and have great insight into how it currently functions, although collaboration is required with the development of the framework and the implementation if the government hopes for this legislation to become a success. So the key is collaboration.

Patients and providers should play a key role in this process, alongside the government, as they are the ones who deal with the system on a daily basis and hold all of the insights into its functions. There needs to be clarity on how the new requirements in Bill 119 will work in a practical and clinical context.

The bill creates a series of new reporting obligations where health information custodians are required to notify the Information and Privacy Commissioner and patients when dealing with a breach. These reporting obligations on the unauthorized collection and use of personal health records seem to differ between electronic and written files. Where possible, these obligations should remain consistent with any type of file.

Concern has also arisen about the feasibility of the new reporting requirement in the case where a consent directive is overridden. The concern over the feasibility of the new reporting requirement arises when dealing with an individual who made the consent that was overridden, who threatens harm to others.

Within a clinical setting, it still remains unclear when custodians or doctors have a reporting obligation to the Information and Privacy Commissioner. Although the provision where privacy breaches are to be reported to the related colleges is a good thing, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario suggests the language be changed to remain consistent with the mandatory reporting provisions in the Health Professions Procedural Code of the RHPA and the Public Hospitals Act, to avoid confusion as to when reporting is provided.

It remains unclear what would happen if the doctor were to provide the college with inaccurate information, and if the onus is on the college to ensure the accuracy of the information provided, how could the college ensure the information is correct? Clarification remains for what information is contemplated for collection beyond what the college currently collects from Ontario physicians.

The changes to the Quality of Care Information Protection Act are very much due, although further information about the circumstances in which critical incidents may be restricted from being reviewed under the QCIPA by a quality-of-care committee is required.

As many of the changes are required, questions remain about how these changes will operate in actual practice—for instance, the disclosure of information about a monitored drug to a doctor when determining future prescriptions.

Those are some of the concerns that have been brought forward. I'm sure the Ministry of Health has received much input from other stakeholders.

I'm hoping, through the continuation of debate, that we will see this bill get stronger, get through committee

and be put in place. I think it's an important bill that we must update, and ensure the privacy of individuals throughout the province as we move to a more electronic format in our province with regard to our health records.

I hope this government will continue to meet with stakeholders on this bill. I'm hoping that the consultation process that occurred in developing this bill was much stronger than what occurred with Bill 122, where we found that the majority of stakeholders didn't engage in conversation until after the bill passed second reading.

The two concerns I brought forward from a number of stakeholders today, I think, can be taken into committee. We can strengthen the bill through strengthening the language and clarifying roles, or ensuring that those roles will be clarified when the regulations are created, to ensure that Bill 119 is strong for today and tomorrow's growth of electronic health records, so that we don't have to return to strengthen this bill sooner. I know, down the road, we will; it's obvious. Technologies change; they get stronger, and they grow in size and capabilities. We need to ensure that our laws keep consistent with it.

We see, with regard to the SAMS records that the government put forward, that their proper planning wasn't in place, and it has cost the government an extra \$90 million just to implement that computer system throughout the province.

I'm hoping that we get this bill correct, that the government listens to the opposition, listens to stakeholders and makes the necessary changes, so that there isn't an additional cost to the system and so that in fact we can implement, and assure Ontarians that they have privacy with their health records as we move to an electronic format and expand the amount of individuals who can have access to those records throughout the province, whether we be increasing the exchange between labs and doctors' offices, labs and pharmacies, independent health facilities, health units.

As that expands and grows, there's so much potential. We could utilize that information to study how health care is operating in this province, to study the best practices of usage of medical information, and usage of drugs and how they're utilized in various parts of the province. I think we can actually have the opportunity to grow the health care system, to be more effective, to have higher quality, by utilizing the data that we're moving to electronic format.

Our role here, though, is to ensure we have the necessary structure in place to protect the privacy of everyday Ontarians, so that there's no manipulation of their data and/or publication of their data for gains for the person who would actually open up that data. I mentioned earlier Councillor Rob Ford, whose medical information was exposed for pure political purposes and/or notoriety in the media. We need to ensure that whether they're Rob Ford or whether they're the average person living in Aylmer, Ontario, people's data is safe and they know they can go to their doctor, get the best-quality care available in Canada—but also ensure that their medical information is safe and secure.

I look forward to further debate as we move forward with this legislation. It's interesting that it took three debate days in order to get my hour out. It's coming to a close. We look forward to the third party's continued deliberations. As we move forward in committee into the new year, I look forward to hearing from the stakeholders who I haven't heard from yet, but at the committee level, and working to make this a strong bill for Ontarians.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I happened to be on duty all three times that the member has tried to do his lead, so I want to congratulate him for keeping at it. It has been in sort of a funny way, but he got it all out. His comments are worth listening to.

0940

This bill was needed for a long time. It basically deals with three pieces of legislation. It deals with privacy and how we ensure privacy and what do we do so that there aren't any more breaches of privacy. It deals with electronic health records and how we ensure that our health care system has a robust and effective electronic health record system so that we can have access to patient information, which will help us transform our health care system in the right direction. But you have to be able to do this in a way that ensures patient confidentiality. Right now, the bill is really short on ensuring that part.

The third part is the Quality of Care Information Protection Act. This is a part that—we knew from the start, when you told hospitals, “If you're having a quality improvement meeting, then you don't have to share information,” that some hospitals would use it wrongly. It was up to us to correct this and make that clear when we first put it out. It wasn't done and we've seen what has happened. People who had adverse events where things went wrong were never able to gain closure, were never able to turn the page because they were told by the hospital that they cannot share that information with them. They cannot share the information with their loved ones because they're using our law in a way that was never meant to be.

This bill needs changes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'm delighted to provide a couple of minutes of comment, having listened to most of the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London's one-hour debate on this.

At a very high level, people deserve to know that they are protected by a health care system that is both accountable and transparent, and ensures the highest quality of care. We continue to believe that the default in our health care system should be disclosure and transparency. That's why I'm very happy to see that the amendments proposed in this legislation include increasing accountability and transparency by making it mandatory to report significant privacy breaches to the Information and Privacy Commissioner and, in certain cases, to relevant regulatory colleges.

As well, the legislation seeks to strengthen the process to prosecute offences under the privacy act by removing the requirement that prosecutions must be commenced within six months of the alleged privacy breach. I think we're all horrified at fairly recent news stories about celebrities whose medical records were snooped into. This legislation would discourage such snooping into patient records by doubling the fine for offences from \$50,000 to \$100,000 for individuals and from \$250,000 to \$500,000 for that organization. I think we all agree that that's a good thing.

As well, the legislation would clarify the authority under which health care providers may collect, use and disclose personal health information in electronic health records.

It's very good legislation, in my opinion.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to add my voice to Bill 119, the health protection act. I think the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London covered a lot of the territory that we, as a party, are concerned about.

As individual MPPs, we all have had—I think back to Sarnia–Lambton as I'm standing here. I've had people come into my office, now that I think about it, who were complaining about health care breaches themselves. Either they were removed from employment because they were accused of it, or people came in and had stories that they wanted to communicate to me in my office over health care breaches.

Probably one of the famous ones here in Toronto is the Rob Ford fiasco with health care. But there have been some in the States, too. I think there were just some high-profile ones the other day, where some people were removed from health care. There's one in Toronto about selling the newborn baby material to life insurance companies. It was thousands, and they sold it for very little money. I couldn't believe they sold it for as little as they did.

Anyway, I think this law will go somewhere towards protecting those individuals from that kind of access. At the end of the day, if we can take legislation and make it better, that's what we are here for.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm certainly pleased to rise today. Before I really get into it, I'd like to welcome the corrections officers, some of whom have been on the road for five hours to be here today to try to correct some of the problems that they are having in the workplace and some of the things with the Conservatives wanting to privatize their jobs and get rid of the good-paying jobs. That's what we're seeing in health care. That's the problem with health care.

I've said this to the health minister a number of times, as we talked about CarePartners, a group of nurses that were making \$15 an hour, and their jobs were scabbed out as they tried to get a first collective agreement—seven months. We talked about home care. I know I

talked to the health minister on this, but when you talked about home care—there are people in my riding, in Niagara—they service the entire area—who, when they're expecting to get service at 8 o'clock in the morning, they were getting a nurse at 10 or 11, and sometimes not until 7 or 8 o'clock at night. Again, what was the problem? What was the common denominator on what was happening? Our health care system is being privatized. There is no doubt about that—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Excuse me. Can I make sure that you are in your own seat?

Interjections.

Mr. Wayne Gates: And I appreciate the Clerk helping you out on that one, too.

I think it's important to talk about the privatization of our health care, because if we don't stop the privatization of health care, our patients are at risk. When you take a look at the layoffs and the cuts to our hospitals, when you look at the AG report that said that we spent close to \$9 billion more on P3 hospitals than what you did on a publicly delivered hospital—when I talk about that, I can talk about Peterborough and I can talk about St. Catharines. St. Catharines hospital was \$1 billion dollars for approximately 350 beds. The Peterborough hospital, which was publicly delivered, publicly built, was \$355 million. We can take that \$600 million and put it right back into front-line health care rather than fighting with nurses who are trying to provide home care for my area.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I return to the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London. You have two minutes.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I appreciate those who made comments to Bill 119. I, too, want to welcome the correctional officers from across the province who are here today. I have Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre in my riding, and I've worked hard to try to ensure that the working conditions are at least improved, at the minimum, with regard to the correctional officers at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre.

I think also at this time we could make mention that, with regard to information within this government, passing on health information—sure, it's secure, but we also need to make sure that the information that we do have accessible, that front-line workers are able to access the entire database of information they need to do their job. I'll make reference to the correctional officers who I know at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre who are unable to get all the information they need in order to do their job to the best safety and also to their best potential. I will make mention of that while they're here.

The member from Niagara Falls did make mention of past Conservative policies. They keep throwing that in our faces, but I will throw back at him the fact that when they were government, the third party, they did throw the social contract in the face of all public sector workers. I haven't met a single person who was happy about the fact that they either had their days cut or their pay cut without any regard to any negotiation. So the member can throw forward any old Conservative policies, but I do

remember that the days of Bob Rae were terrible for this province. I hope we never, ever reach that point again. We're getting close, with the current government in power today. However, Bob Rae and the NDP, when they were government, obliterated this province, in fact, with their new initiatives.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

0950

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It is a pleasure for me to rise today, on behalf of the people I represent in London West, to offer some thoughts on Bill 119, An Act to amend the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, to make certain related amendments and to repeal and replace the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, 2004.

This is a very complex bill. Unusually for the pieces of legislation we deal with in this House, there are four pages of explanatory notes to provide an overview of what is in the bill. The amendments proposed are complex. They put in place a bit of a regulatory framework to address three of the most critical issues in our health care system: protecting personal health information, protecting the privacy and confidentiality of e-health records—electronic health records—and also ensuring accountability and full transparency when medical errors occur.

These three issues are addressed in two schedules in the bill: The protection of personal health information and of e-health records are addressed in schedule 1 of the bill, and the issue around accountability and transparency in addressing medical errors is addressed in schedule 2 of the bill.

The reason that these three issues—the protection of patient privacy and confidentiality, and also accountability when mistakes occur—are so important for this Legislature to address is because the health care system relies fundamentally on having a strong framework in place so that trust is maintained between patients and health care providers—actually, it's not only health care providers; it's the physicians that they deal with, it's the nurse who they talk to, it's every health care professional that they come into contact with while they are in that circle of care.

But it's also the system as a whole. Patients have to have trust in the system as a whole; that the health care system will ensure the protection of their personal information, ensure that their privacy will be protected and that their information will not be leaked or released inadvertently to others in society.

When we visit the doctor, we are asked all kinds of questions and we watch our physician recording this information—often, now, into a computer. We're asked, "Do you drink? How much do you drink?" We're asked about our sexual activity. We're asked about whether we use drugs. All of this information is very sensitive, Speaker, and you can imagine, the implications for employment and for personal life if this information is released.

Unfortunately, over the past decade we have seen numerous examples of where the trust has been broken

and where people's personal health information has actually been leaked. In large part, that has resulted in the amendments that we see before us today.

The legislation that is being amended in Bill 119 was introduced over a decade ago. It was introduced in 2004, and we have seen very egregious examples of where that legislation has failed to protect people's personal health information. Of course, with the advent of electronic health records, there is a need for a new framework to address the reality that people's medical records are being maintained in electronic form rather than the paper form of the past.

One of the examples of a leak of personal information that has happened quite close to my community: Just last year a woman in Sarnia had booked surgery at a hospital in London. She had made arrangements to have her surgery conducted, and she received a letter from a private cosmetic surgery clinic—a privately owned, for-profit clinic—inviting her to come and get her surgery done at this private, for-profit clinic instead of at the public hospital in London where she had booked her surgery. Certainly, Speaker, as you can imagine, this raised all kinds of questions about how on earth this private, for-profit clinic gained access to her personal information, to the fact that she had surgery booked in London. This clinic was able to try to solicit her business, frankly.

I know that when my children were born, about 20 years ago—I think anybody in my age cohort who has kids about that age remembers going home with the new baby and very shortly thereafter being contacted by a baby photographer. In my case, I got a phone call. This was routine practice. The hospital had sold the lists of new mothers to the photography studio, so the photography studio could access that personal health information about somebody who had just given birth and was then able to use that information to try to make a profit.

Speaker, this is absolutely unacceptable. It must not happen because, as I said at the beginning, it erodes trust in the system, and the system is based on trust.

There are some other recent examples of where personal health information has been leaked. In 2013, data storage sticks—flash drives—containing the personal health information of 18,000 patients at Toronto Western Hospital's eye clinic went missing. That prompted an investigation by the privacy commissioner and it also led to an apology being issued by the chief doctor, who had failed to provide appropriate oversight over these data storage sticks that contained this information.

In 2013, again, there was a memory card and 18,000 people were involved: 18,000 people had their names, their addresses, their birth dates and their marital status all recorded on this memory card. The card was stolen from the car of a Peel region employee.

Speaker, we recently in London had an example of that just this past summer, where an employee at the health unit had their laptop, which included personal health information, again, on new mothers and babies, stolen from that employee's car in the parking lot.

We have to ensure that there are appropriate protections in place to prevent these kinds of thefts, these kinds of losses of personal health information.

We know that Councillor Rob Ford and Jack Layton were two very high-profile cases, where their personal information was leaked to the media while they were being treated in hospital.

Finally, another very high-profile incident of a privacy breach of personal health information was at Scarborough's Rouge Valley Health System, when the identities of new moms were allegedly sold to a firm that was offering education investment vehicles, RESPs. I mentioned my experience 20 years ago of my identity as a new mother being sold to a baby photography studio; here we see new mothers' information being sold to a financial firm so that they could sell education investment products.

1000

So these kinds of leaks really do great damage to the trust that needs to be maintained in Ontario's health system. But, you know, there are other things that are equally corrosive in terms of that trust relationship between patients and their health care providers and the health care system as a whole.

In my community in London, just this week, we learned that 500 patients have been informed that their surgeries will have to be delayed. These are surgeries that they had booked in advance, and now they are being told that the surgeries will be delayed. Many of these people have been waiting up to two years to have these so-called elective surgeries performed. Now, they are told that they are effectively being bumped. The problem is, booking a surgery is not like booking a flight on a plane; it's not as easy as when you are a passenger on a plane, you're going on holiday and you're informed, "Oh, sorry, we overbooked. We'll have to bump you to the next flight." For many of these people who are being bumped, whose surgeries are being delayed because there's a cap on the number of surgeries that the hospital can perform, this is not like they were taking a vacation and it's a minor inconvenience. For many of these people, this opens them up to all kinds of risks that can have a very serious effect on their health status.

There was a constituent of mine that I spoke about in the House the other day, Brian Peck, who is waiting for hip-replacement surgery. He has fallen three times since he initially got the recommendation for surgery. His surgeon actually told him that he will likely end up in a wheelchair before he is able to get the surgery conducted. His health is being seriously compromised by his inability to access the surgery. The long-term consequences, the need for more costly interventions down the road, are really affecting the quality of the health care provision that he is entitled to.

Some of the other contexts in which we're looking at this bill, when we talk about trust in the health care system—we have seen, day after day, announcements of more cuts in the system. We've seen a government that has frozen budgets for hospitals for four years in a row.

As our population ages, the implications of freezing hospital budgets mean that hospitals are being asked to do more effectively with less, when you factor in the impact of the true cost of inflation and when you factor in the fact that there are more frail elderly who are needing to access hospital services. They come to hospital with much more complex needs.

I want to move on to the other part of the legislation that deals with electronic health records. The bill includes some new provisions for the prescribed organization, who will have access to these electronic health records. Those are the organizations that are responsible for developing and maintaining these eHealth records. This is our reality. As I mentioned, we are moving to an electronic age. We know that it is important. There are lots of benefits from having computerized health information. But as we do that, as we move in that direction, we must make sure that there are appropriate safeguards in place to protect the confidentiality and security of that data that is recorded in these electronic databases.

One of the issues that New Democrats are very concerned about deals with data storage of these e-health records outside Ontario and outside Canada.

The chief technology officer at Toronto's University Health Network said, "There's a lot of nervousness about storing data in the United States because of the Patriot Act. Our main concern is privacy, partly because of sharing with other people and partly because the Patriot Act gives the US government authority to have access to records if they're stored on American soil."

In a system that actually encourages hospitals to outsource some of their functions, hospitals may well be looking to data storage providers that are based in the US because it is cheaper; because it saves the hospital money, in a context where they have been dealing with frozen budgets for four years. In that process of saving hospitals money, we may be compromising the security and confidentiality of patients' data that is stored in these electronic health records. As I said, that is a direct hit on the trust that we need to maintain between patients and the health system.

The final issue that I want to briefly address that is dealt with in this legislation concerns quality-of-care information. Bill 119 repeals the Quality of Care Information Protection Act to respond to some of the scathing investigative reporting that was done by the Toronto Star about a shocking lack of follow-up with families of loved ones who have been subject to medical error. Certainly, we absolutely believe that the loved ones of patients who potentially died as a result of medical error deserve to know what happened. They deserve to be informed of the results of any kind of investigation that is conducted. And health care professionals who were involved in the care of that person who was harmed by a medical error need to feel that they can be honest and that they can share what they know during the process of an investigation, without the threat of disciplinary action or reprisals against them if they co-operate with an investigation about what happened.

The amendments that are proposed in this section of the bill are certainly long overdue. They were, as I said, prompted by some recent high-profile cases. Frankly, it's appalling that these provisions weren't in place earlier on.

Having said that, one of our ongoing concerns, and an issue that I know that we will be raising during the committee input on this bill, is around inconsistency and variability in how these protections are applied in the first place. What is proposed in Bill 119 will not address those issues. It will not address the fact that different hospitals, different health care providers are able to interpret their obligations under QCIPA as they see fit. This is a big problem. In particular, it's a problem when we're looking at the number of private for-profit health care providers who will not be covered by this legislation.

So this is a long-overdue step. We're glad to see it come forward, but we have lots of concerns that we will be talking about when it moves to committee.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30 a.m.

The House recessed from 1010 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I have a great deal of constituents here today from Nepean-Carleton, starting with two family friends, Gordon and Kathleen Stringer, who are Rowan Stringer's parents. We have a bill in Rowan's name.

I'd also like to introduce Dr. Henry Svec, who is a registered psychologist; Ashley Powers, who is the co-owner and physiotherapist at Dynamic; Dr. Sarah Cohen from Dynamic; Paul Hunter of Rugby Canada; Ashton Spear from CG Group, on behalf of the Ontario Athletic Therapist Association; Dr. Frances Flint of the Ontario Athletic Therapist Association; Dr. Cameron Marshall and Kyle Reidhead from Complete Concussion Management; Carol DeMatteo from McMaster University; Scott Watson, Louise Logan and Normand Côté from Parachute Canada; Barb Gillie, Phil Selig and Gary Thomas of the Barrhaven Scottish rugby club; and Susan Kitchen and Mercedes Watson of the Coaches Association of Ontario.

Please welcome them all to the chamber to see their government in action.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It does look like we have quite a few people who are anxious to get up and introduce. Please stick as closely to the introduction as possible, and we'll get through all of these. I make the commitment that our guests will be greeted.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have three guests this morning from OPSEU Local 368, at the Central East Correctional Centre. They are Adam Richards, Leanne Richards and Evan King. Welcome to Queen's Park, and thank you for being here.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: In the gallery today, we have got many of our hard-working and brave correctional offi-

cers, who keep our communities safe across the province. I want all the members of the House to welcome our correctional officers who are here with us at Queen's Park.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It gives me great pleasure to welcome corrections, probation and parole officers from throughout Ontario this morning. We have representation from the following facilities: South West Detention Centre, Local 135; Central East and Central North Correctional Centres, Locals 368 and 369; Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre, Local 108; Maplehurst Correctional Complex, Local 234; Ontario Correctional Institute, Local 229; Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre, Local 411; Thunder Bay Correctional Centre and the Thunder Bay jail, Locals 368 and 737; Toronto East Detention Centre, Local 582; Chatham, Local 130; and the Roy McMurtry Youth Centre, Local 290.

I hope I haven't missed anybody, but if I did, forgive me. Let's welcome them once again. Thank you for coming.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I'd like to welcome corrections officers from the South West Detention Centre in my hometown. I'd like to welcome Zack Swainson, Rob Wilson, Darrell Rockwood, Karim Sakaan and Darren Wilson. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Joining us today in the east members' gallery is someone from my staff, Morgan Stahl, and her mother, Margaret Stahl. Joining them, also, are William Petker and Tracy Wilson. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Michael Harris: I want to introduce Ryan Graham and Dennis Berg from Kitchener, correctional officers belonging to Local 234 at Maplehurst. Thanks for coming, guys.

Mr. John Vanthof: On behalf of the member from Welland: One of our page captains is Benjamin Shoalts. His mother, Kerry Shoalts, and father, Todd Shoalts, are in the gallery this morning.

Mr. John Fraser: We have a number of people in the galleries here today in support of Rowan's Law. We have Myles Spencer from Rugby Canada; Al Charron from Rugby Canada, who also happens to be a constituent; Patrick Hamilton; Patricia Hamilton; Lindsay Hamilton; Spencer Hamilton; Katherine Frost; Sandy Niquet; Maya Rattray; and David Butler, and Mark Johnson, Edie Michel, Bob Illman from Rugby Ontario.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I'd like to introduce Kyle Johnston-Laplane, who works in my constituency office in Carleton-Mississippi Mills. He is here to visit with us today.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It is my privilege to welcome, as we have heard, correctional officers from across the province.

I would also like to welcome Smokey Thomas, president of OPSEU; Eddy Almeida, VP of OPSEU; Ron Elliot; Tom O'Neill; and Monte Vieselmeyer, MERC chair.

Mike Lundy is here, and I would like to point out that Mike Lundy is the president of OPSEU Local 737 in Thunder Bay and also vice-chair of health and safety. We would like to welcome him specifically.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I'd like to welcome my OLIP intern, Eric Zinn, who is in the members' east gallery today. Welcome.

M. Jeff Yurek: C'est un honneur pour moi de vous présenter deux invitées spéciales qui sont à Queen's Park aujourd'hui. Ce sont des représentantes du Centre francophone de Toronto. Nous saluons la présidente du comité d'administration du centre, M^{me} Claire Francoeur, et la directrice générale du centre, M^{me} Lise Marie Baudry. Bonjour et bienvenue à Queen's Park.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'd like to welcome some delegates in support of Rowan's Law today: David Patterson and David Butcher from Rugby Ontario; and Andrew Laskoski, Jeannette Quach, Jennifer Mark, Darryl Gomes, Jessica Pemberton, Heather Tugnett, Lorianne Hynes and Derek DeBono from the OATA. Thank you very much, and welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: It gives me great pleasure to introduce the mother and father of my page, Michelle Lewis, from the riding of Davenport. Welcome, Nicole Knowlton and Shaun Lewis, here to Queen's Park. Thank you so much.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'd be pleased to continue my list: Tammy McGregor-Carson, the chair of provincial health and safety from OPSEU; and Sean Dunn, Alex Sawicki. I recognize some presidents here—Chris Jackal and Chad Oldfield—and many other vice-presidents and elected officials from OPSEU, and the hard-working corrections officers here today.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Today, my wonderful page, Dayo Kehinde, has in the public gallery her mom, Imo, her father, Michael, and her sisters Tolu and Ayo. Welcome and merry Christmas.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I have two guests here today from the Canadian Women's Foundation. We have the president, Sheherazade Hirji, and board member Marilyn Roycroft. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I, too, have a visitor from the correctional officers from Sudbury Jail. His name is Nathan Aubin, and he is the president of OPSEU Local 617 and a good friend of mine. He's making his way here. I hope he gets here pretty soon.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'd like to welcome Dr. Michael Strong, dean of the Schulich School of Medicine at Western University.

Also, a big hello to Smokey Thomas and all of the OPSEU members who are here.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'd like to welcome Ron Elliot, regional vice-president of OPSEU, who is also a constituent of mine in London West. Welcome, Ron.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I would like to acknowledge, on behalf of the member from Eglinton-Lawrence, page Jack Farley, who is welcoming his parents to the House this morning. Simon Farley and Manjusha Pawagi are here with us this morning.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order, the member from Nepean—Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I would like to congratulate my colleague from Huron—Bruce for a great birthday today and wish her well. I know that all members will wish her well, after a very long trip that she just took, representing our province. Congratulations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Happy birthday. Further introductions? Last call for introductions. It is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Patrick Brown: To the Premier: I'd like to go back to the Auditor General's report about energy. I'd just like to remind the government that the AG revealed that the Liberals will be overcharging the equivalent of \$12,000 for every man, woman and child in Ontario for the cost of electricity—\$12,000.

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That's a year's worth of rent in downtown Toronto. That's the cost of a young person's first car. That's a graduate student's tuition for a year. That's a semester of backpacking in Europe. That would cover the average family's food for an entire year.

Mr. Speaker, why is it okay for the government to pick the pockets of Ontarians?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm very eager to answer this question. But just before I do, this may be my last opportunity before the House rises to wish everyone a very, very happy holiday. I hope that everyone in the House, in the gallery and in the province has an opportunity in this time period to spend some time with family, with friends. It's not always an easy time of year for people, but I hope that everyone has the opportunity to appreciate this beautiful place that we live in.

Mr. Speaker, on that note, I just had the opportunity, with members of the opposition parties, to be in Paris at the COP21 conference on climate change. I have to say—and I don't know if the opposition members had this experience—I had people coming to me, including Premiers of other states—Australia, for example—looking to us as a model for the changes that we have made, and I will come back to that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier, and since I didn't get the question answered the first time, I'll try the second time: The AG said the government could have achieved all of their renewable goals and not overcharged \$9.2 billion.

The government's overcharging of electricity will cost an average family \$32,000. That's a down payment on your first home in my riding of Simcoe North. That's a

new Dodge Caravan. That's a 24-foot pontoon boat. It's a complete kitchen renovation.

So my question, very directly, is this: How can this government knowingly take opportunities away from families by overcharging them on energy? The question is, how do you justify this unprecedented overcharging of energy in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again I say to the Leader of the Opposition, the changes that we have made in Ontario, including the shutdown of the coal-fired plants, the investment in renewable energy, and the avoidance of pollution that has saved lives in terms of asthma and costs—those are initiatives that other jurisdictions are looking to us for. They are looking to us.

They were very happy to see us there—for example, Manitoba, Quebec and Ontario signing a memorandum of understanding on cap and trade. They are looking to us. They are asking us how we did it, in terms of the shutdown of the coal-fired plants, the avoidance of those health care costs.

We are leading the way. We will continue to do that, whether or not the Leader of the Opposition is with us.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again for the Premier: It is the Christmas season. Parents, grandparents and guardians have been saving all year to put an extra present under the tree. This government could have made that a little bit easier if they hadn't overcharged \$32,000 for every family in Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Mr. Patrick Brown: That could have bought 65 iPads to wrap.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Mr. Patrick Brown: That could have bought 80 Xbox Ones to put under the tree. That could have bought 248 kids a new Supercycle to ride.

Mr. Speaker, just picture those gifts. Picture the look on a kid's face as they see those gifts under the tree—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I took the approach of trying to ask for order only, but if I'm getting the signalling from you that it's not good enough, I'll ramp it up. I wish I didn't have to. So when I ask for order, please give it, and don't start right after I ask for order.

Please finish.

Mr. Patrick Brown: To the Premier: In the spirit of Christmas, will you give Ontario one important Christmas gift? Never again will you intervene in the energy sector. Will you give us that present? Never again will we have Liberals intervene and cost Ontario more. Will you do it for Santa?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier—

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the Leader of the Opposition—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. I'm still standing.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Oh, sorry.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Please finish.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, as the Leader of the Opposition measures the world in terms of the cost of Xboxes, let me just talk about some costs that I think are critical.

Tim Gray of Environmental Defence says this—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Want to measure it in the cost of scandals?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, come to order.

Interjection: Do you want to go home?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do you?

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Ontario's renewable energy program was instrumental in the coal phase-out, which was justified because the coal plants were estimated to cost \$4.4 billion in health and environmental costs—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Agriculture, come to order. The member from Dufferin–Caledon, come to order.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Five billion dollars in extra costs over 20 years to avoid \$4.4 billion per year sounds like good value to me. Of course, there's also the tiny bonus of clear blue skies and smog-free summers. That is the cost we have avoided.

The health costs of those children who have not been admitted to hospital? That's how I will measure success.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Your signalling is telling me that you need to be warned, and if I have to get that today, I'm going to get it.

New question.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Patrick Brown: The Liberals were recently chiding the third party leader for not having questions on climate change. Well, to the Premier: It's difficult to criticize a climate change plan that has no details, that hasn't been released to the public.

The Premier's idea of fighting climate change is photo op environmentalism and press release politics. The reality is it was the two previous Premiers of Ontario who closed the coal-fired plants, not this Premier.

I've asked for details about this government's climate change plan. They wouldn't give us any. The government has sat on their cap-and-trade plan since 2009. If she has a plan, if she has a strategy, what is it?

Mr. Speaker, in all seriousness, will the Premier tell the Legislature what will show up first at Queen's Park: details on her climate change plan, the Loch Ness monster or Polkaroo? What will show up first?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Leader of the Opposition understands how important it is that all of the coal-fired plants have been shut down and that we have passed legislation to make sure they will not be rebuilt. There will not be coal-fired generation of electricity in Ontario again.

I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition knows that investing \$20 million in charging stations for electric vehicles is a very important step, because if we are going to have electric vehicles in the province, if there's going to be uptake, that infrastructure has to be in place.

I know the Leader of the Opposition understands that the cap-and-trade system that is being developed is being developed in conjunction—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville, second time.

And now, if it's going to get ramped up, I'm going to warnings. That means I'm not waiting. A warning: Next time, you're out.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It is being developed in conjunction with Quebec and California. We signed a memorandum of understanding with Manitoba while we were in Paris, so central Canada is on the same track.

The plan is in place, and the Leader of the Opposition knows it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: I would have hoped in that response we would have had some details finally, but unfortunately, not.

It's awfully easy to stage photo ops and claim you will fight climate change. It's easy to set greenhouse reduction targets for 2030 or 2050, but it takes actual work, actual details to make a difference now.

Your Environmental Commissioner has told us that you won't reach your 2020 targets—not even close. In fact, during this Premier's first year in office, greenhouse gas emissions actually rose 171 megatonnes. The Premier is more concerned about a green backdrop than dropping emissions.

Can the Premier give a single example of what she has done during her time as Premier—not previous Premiers? Other than signing agreements and attending conferences, it's all lip service. Will the Premier tell the House what she is going to do? What are the details of your plan? Please—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, this from a member of a government in Ottawa for nine years whose record was so dismal on this file that the current Prime

Minister, when he was in Paris and said, “Canada is back,” the room cheered.

1050

The Leader of the Opposition may not like the fact that we have set clear targets. We have set an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions against 1990 levels by 2015. He may not like the fact that the design features of our cap-and-trade system are being developed. We're working with California and Quebec. He may not like that we're investing in infrastructure for electric vehicles. But that's what we're doing because we are going to continue to lead in the fight against climate change.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please.

Final supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: It just appears to be more hot air. You will ultimately be judged on—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs is warned.

Carry on.

Mr. Patrick Brown: To the Premier: You will ultimately be judged on your greenhouse gas emissions. It's easy to blame previous Prime Ministers and previous Premiers. You will be judged on your actions alone. The Premier loves to talk about fighting climate change, but it has been just that: just talk.

We all know you just got back from Paris. I think it's great that you went to represent our province. I would never say you shouldn't attend. In fact, our own critic went as well. But if you want to talk about a carbon footprint, the Premier flew back and forth twice. You took 22 advisers with you on that trip. That just seems excessive.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Actually, it's difficult to get one side when the other side continues.

Wrap up, please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: So I ask again: Other than photo ops, press conferences and press releases, what has this Premier done to fight climate change? I don't want to hear about your predecessors. Your only announcement in Paris was about Manitoba.

What has this Premier done to fight climate change in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, here's what the Leader of the Opposition needs to know: I walked into a concert in—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward-Hastings is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I got back from Paris yesterday afternoon and I walked into a concert in one of the schools in my riding in the evening, and the first person who spoke to me was a young girl from grade 5. Her name was Sloane, and she came up to me and she said, “I

just wrote a letter to you and I want to talk to you.” Her question, Mr. Speaker, was about climate change.

So here's a child in grade 5, talking to the Premier of the province, saying to me, “What are you doing?” My answer to her was exactly the same as it is to the Leader of the Opposition. We are doing everything we can. We are challenging industry. We have shut down the coal-fired plants. We are developing a plan to make sure that we continue to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, and we're developing technology to help other countries. We're taking the leadership—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please.

New question.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I want to begin by wishing the best of the holiday season to Ontarians, on behalf of New Democrats, and to encourage Ontarians to reach out a helping hand to those who are less fortunate, particularly the Syrian refugees who are arriving in our province today.

My question is to the Premier. In November, I raised the fact that public hydro agencies in the provinces of Quebec and Manitoba are investing more in conservation than here in Ontario, while Nova Scotia's privatized hydro agency is actually fighting against conservation.

When the Premier was in Paris, did she explain why she's selling off Hydro One and giving away one of the most important tools in the fight against climate change?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: One of the conversations that was very, very front of mind in Paris was the investment in infrastructure. There was a lot of conversation about the need to invest in public transportation.

So, quite to the contrary, people wanted to know how we were moving ahead to make that investment, and the leader of the third party knows that in order to make that investment, we need funds. We need money to be able to do that, and that is the motivator for the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One.

In fact, I had many conversations in Paris about how we are moving ahead with making the largest investment in infrastructure across the province in the province's history, and a large part of that is transit and transportation infrastructure. That's what people in Paris are talking about.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier travelled to Paris to talk about fighting climate change. Hydro One will be—should be—one of the keys to energy conservation in this province. As a private company, though, Hydro One will make money when they sell more electricity, but it is in the interest of our planet to use less electricity. I'm sure the Premier can see the contradiction.

Can she explain why she is handing away control of Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think what's critical is that we have clean, renewable generation in this prov-

ince. That is what we've got. We know that having companies that are efficient and competitive is a good thing for the province.

We know that Hydro One can be improved. And though I've said that the motivation for broadening the ownership of Hydro One is the investment in infrastructure, which it is, we will also see an improved company as a result of this change. That's a benefit to the people of the province and it's a benefit to the people who get their service from Hydro One.

As I said, there was a lot of conversation about the importance of having infrastructure investment that's sustainable. That is the work that we're doing as a result of broadening the ownership of Hydro One.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Ontario families want to see investments in transit and transportation infrastructure that will help make our economy greener. Transit takes cars off the road, but selling Hydro doesn't build transit, according to the FAO, and, in fact, according to the Minister of Finance in his own fall economic update. On the one hand, selling Hydro One hobbles our ability to conserve energy and tackle climate change; and on the other hand, it actually fails to build transit.

I thought the Premier was serious about climate change, so why is she moving Ontario backwards?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The premise of the leader of the third party's question is just not accurate. The fact is, a cap-and-trade system, the shutdown of coal-fired plants, the introduction of infrastructure for electric vehicles, the investment in sustainable infrastructure—all of those things are going to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

We have set firm targets; we have met our 2014 target, and we are working with our partners across the country to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Ontario and across the country.

I understand that the leader of the third party is not going to support the investment in infrastructure that we're making. I think that's wrong-headed; I think that she should be supporting that. But the reality is, we are going to continue on this path because we know that there is an environmental and an economic imperative to making those investments.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

New question.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. In less than a month, hydro bills will be going up another 10% because the government is eliminating the clean energy benefit. The government's plan for low-income Ontarians seems to have a bit of a short circuit.

What is this Premier going to do to make sure that people struggling to pay their hydro bills actually get the relief that they've been promised by her government?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The OESP, the Ontario energy support program, is designed exactly to do—

Mr. John Yakabuski: You've spent more time advertising it than it's been subscribed.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned. I guess you didn't hear me.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member who was heckling thinks that low-income Ontarians shouldn't know about the program, but we actually think low-income Ontarians should know about the program. It is designed exactly to address the challenges that the leader of the third party has identified.

We are going to make sure that people get that information—there have been flyers that have gone in electricity bills. The reality is that we are going to redouble our efforts to make sure that people get the information so that they can apply for those programs.

1100

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Some 7% of low-income Ontarians have applied for the OESP. Once they have applied, it takes six to eight weeks to be approved. Even if every single person applied by the end of the day today, they wouldn't get approved until sometime in February. Supporting our most vulnerable neighbours is something people expect the government to get right, but yet again, here we have the Liberals making yet another mess in the energy sector.

What will this Premier do for the hundreds of thousands of Ontarians who have been promised support but won't be getting it during the coldest months of the year?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I just want to say to the leader of the third party that I was concerned about the outreach to low-income Ontarians. I've said to my staff that I want to make sure that local distribution companies make an extra effort to connect with low-income Ontarians to make sure they make the application, because that funding is earmarked for those people. That money is earmarked for low-income Ontarians who may be struggling to make ends meet.

We will make sure that they get that money. We will do everything we can to make sure that that happens within the next couple of weeks.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The holidays are around the corner. Selling Hydro One is a big gift to the Premier's friends, and she's giving Ontarians a lump of coal. People are going to pay more, and they have their Liberal government to blame.

How did this Premier so quickly lose sight of what matters to the people of this province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The leader of the third party knows that she's trying to connect things that are

not connected. The fact is that there is a new program in place, the Ontario energy support program. At the same time that the debt retirement charge is coming off bills, we are putting in place a program that will support low-income Ontarians.

The broadening of the ownership of Hydro One is an unrelated issue. It is an issue because we are investing in infrastructure and we are broadening the ownership of Hydro One. The leader of the third party knows that and she's desperate to make a connection, a connection that is not there.

We will continue to invest in infrastructure because we know that our competitiveness as a province relies on those investments.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton Mountain is warned.

New question.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mr. Rick Nicholls: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Minister, you know about the fire this past week at Toronto South. Several correctional officers and staff were taken to hospital and treated for smoke inhalation. Well, we just learned that there was a fire at Toronto East Detention Centre back on November 27, resulting in 12 staff, including six COs and six RNs, being taken for smoke inhalation. An additional three inmates were also taken to the hospital.

As was the case, several safety and security breaches occurred, and it would appear as though staff were muzzled once again.

Staff and inmate assaults, suicides and disturbances are occurring more frequently. Minister, you need to start listening to the issues these officers are bringing forward.

Actions speak louder than words. Demonstrate the respect that they deserve before an officer is seriously hurt or, God forbid, killed. Their lives are placed in danger daily and they watch even the worst of the worst offenders. They play an integral part in rehab.

To the minister: When will you start listening and act upon their recommendations and fix this crisis in corrections?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, let me start by recognizing many of our hard-working corrections, probation and parole officers who are here today.

The member is right: They work in a very difficult environment and they work very hard every single day to keep our communities safe. One of the things that I've been doing in my capacity as the minister is talking to a lot of people, including our correctional officers, as to how we build a better system of corrections, and one thing I've heard again and again, including from our correctional officers, is that the status quo is not good. We need to transform our system.

The very first step in that transformation is hiring more new correctional officers. That is why we have been

working hard on that front. Over the last two years alone, we have hired 571 new correctional officers, but we are not stopping there. We will continue to hire even more correctional officers in the months and years to come and make sure they get intensive, proper training in order to keep our community safe.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Well, Minister, if you respect them, stop endangering them.

We learned this morning that corrections staff rejected your tentative agreement, citing a 67% "no" vote. So it's back to the table.

Detention centres are overcrowded and understaffed; caseloads for our probation and parole officers are huge, and there are instances where these officers are met by probation parolees carrying weapons. Where are the safety measures to protect our officers?

A labour disruption means putting management, even inmates, at risk at our detention centres. Communities would be put at risk where detention centres are, and I'm told by very reliable sources that a strike could also mean a huge setback of months or even years for all the work that probation and parole officers are currently doing for their clients, since there would be no accountability.

Minister, we know your ministry has been preparing for a labour dispute. What steps have you taken, in the event of a labour disruption—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: —to ensure the safety of all?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please.

When I say "thank you," it's over.

Minister?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: We will continue to work with our correctional staff and all our partners to make sure that our—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Windsor West is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: —that our jails are safe and our correctional offices in particular are safe at all times.

What is ironic is that, from the member opposite, of all the questions he has asked, I have heard of no plan around transformation. How would he propose that we change the status quo?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

I'm seeking co-operation from everybody, and we are on the warning system.

Finish, please.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, he serves under a leader who actually supported the tough-on-crime policies by the Harper Conservatives that resulted in the kind of overcrowding that we see in our jails—not to mention, just in October 2012, the member opposite issued a press release asking for a wage freeze increase—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
New question.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question will be to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. I'm pleased to be able to ask these questions today with a full house of corrections officers and another few hundred outside this room. So maybe, today, we'll get some real answers.

Correctional officers and probation and parole officers across this province soundly rejected a contract with this Liberal government. The fact that there is no deal puts this province one step closer to a strike or lockout in our jails. I asked the Acting Premier about this earlier this week and received an impressive non-answer, so I'll try the minister instead.

We know that while jails stay chronically overcrowded and clearly dangerous, the province has built or kept aside bed space for managers in the event of a strike or lockout. The last time there was a lockout, the government—a Conservative government—used managers from other ministries and departments to staff the jails.

What's the plan? In light of the hostage-taking and crisis in Thunder Bay, the fires at Toronto South, floods, lockdowns, assaults, malfunctioning cell locks, breaking glass, riots and overdoses, does the Premier really want unqualified managers from various ministries like finance, the environment or the Treasury Board running our jails?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: First of all, we're disappointed that the tentative agreement that was negotiated between the Treasury Board and the OPSEU correctional bargaining unit was not approved by the members. It's a democratic process and we respect that. Of course, we as a government remain committed to bargaining and look forward to determining the next steps.

As I was saying earlier, though, what our focus needs to be is to ensure that we transform our correctional services. We need to move away from a model of warehousing—that's what our correctional officers continue to tell me—to a system that really focuses on corrections, that really focuses on the rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates. What we need to do is break the cycle of re-offence.

We, as the government, are not interested in dealing with capacity issues by building more jails. In fact, we want to reduce the demand for jails in order to deal with the issue around capacity.

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Monday night in Thunder Bay was a terrible night, as we've talked about. Again, I'm pleased to welcome Mike Lundy, the president from Thunder Bay jail. His team went through one heck of a night on Monday.

The correctional officer that was taken hostage at the Thunder Bay jail underwent a traumatizing experience none of us could imagine. What he couldn't imagine was

getting to see his family again. Though he is physically safe now, the incident will undoubtedly have a lasting impact on the officer, his family and his colleagues.

Over the past three days, \$23,000 and counting has been raised for the officer and his family through a crowd-funding campaign. This will only scratch the surface of the support that this affected officer will require. I think it says a lot that Ontarians are raising money to support a front-line officer in his time of need. I also think it says a lot about the lack of public faith in the support that he and others in need can expect from this government.

Will the minister commit to working with the Minister of Labour to ensure that correctional officers receive the respect and post-traumatic stress supports they deserve?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Let me address the issue around Thunder Bay. It was a very dangerous situation. I want to thank again our very professional correctional officers and all staff, along with the Thunder Bay police, who worked extremely hard to defuse that situation in a very professional way.

I had the opportunity to speak with the correctional officer in question and I've given him assurance that all supports will be there for him so he gets healthy sooner. I also had the opportunity to speak with the superintendent and the local president, Mr. Michael Lundy, who is here with us today.

Speaker, I've said this before: Our correctional officers, and our probation and parole officers as well, do dangerous work. I'm working very closely with the Minister of Labour to ensure that all the work that he's doing around PTSD and around prevention and resiliency as it relates to our first responders—that our correctional officers are part of that conversation.

LA FRANCOPHONIE

M^{me} Eleanor McMahon: Ma question est pour la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones. L'année 2015 a été historique dans l'histoire de notre province. Elle a marqué le 400^e anniversaire de présence française en Ontario. Nous y avons célébré l'apport significatif des francophones à l'essor de notre province depuis 1615.

Monsieur le Président, est-ce que la ministre peut nous faire un survol des célébrations qui ont eu lieu cette année?

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Je veux remercier la députée de Burlington pour cette importante question. Oui, cette année, 2015, quelle belle année—les célébrations du 400^e de la présence française en Ontario. On nous a accordé un budget de 5,9 millions de dollars sur une période de trois ans. Beaucoup d'activités ont été organisées pour les célébrations dans les différentes communautés.

Alors, c'est toute la province qui a pu participer à des événements comme le Rendez-Vous Champlain à Penetang, le Festival franco-ontarien à Ottawa, la Franco-Fête de Toronto, et tant d'autres célébrations culturelles et touristiques, comme à Thunder Bay, Hearst, Sudbury et Windsor. Bien sûr, nous avons aussi investi dans de beaux legs. Les legs dans lesquels on a investi, j'en parlerai plus tard à la question supplémentaire.

Le Président (L'hon. Dave Levac): Merci. Question?

M^{me} Eleanor McMahon: Ma question est encore pour la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones, et j'aimerais la remercier pour sa réponse.

Je suis fière que la province ait ainsi reconnu la contribution des Premières Nations et des francophones à bâtir notre société. La ministre nous a parlé de legs permanents. Pourrait-elle partager avec la Chambre quels héritages le 400^e anniversaire va laisser pour les générations futures?

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Les legs dont je voulais vous parler tantôt—premièrement, nous avons investi 1,4 million de dollars dans le beau parc à Penetang, lieu de rencontre de Samuel de Champlain et le chef huron-wendat. Nous avons aussi investi dans un excellent docudrame, le Rêve de Champlain, fait par TFO, qui a reçu un prix Gémeaux de reconnaissance. Je vous encourage à le voir. Il a été visionné aussi par beaucoup de citoyens en Europe et dans différents pays.

Nous avons aussi offert une plaque commémorative à Honfleur, le port de départ de Champlain. Nous avons également investi dans un musée franco-ontarien en ligne. Et, monsieur le Président, restez à l'écoute; il y aura d'autres annonces qui vont être faites plus tard.

Mais comme procureure générale, je voulais dire, à toutes fins, que dans la période des fêtes, je demande aux gens d'être très prudents et surtout de ne pas conduire en état d'ébriété ou lorsque vous avez pris de l'alcool. On veut que tout l'Ontario soit en sécurité dans ce temps des fêtes.

CONCUSSIONS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Merry Christmas, Speaker, to you and all of my colleagues.

My question is to the government House leader. I'm joined today by Kathleen and Gordon Stringer—

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. There will be no interruption from the gallery, please. Thank you.

Please finish.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'm joined today by Kathleen and Gordon Stringer, my constituents from Ottawa. They are here to support a tripartite bill that bears their daughter, Rowan's, name. This law would make Ontario the first jurisdiction in Canada to put in place a law around concussion identification, treatment and awareness. It is based on 49 recommendations from a lengthy and emotional coroner's inquest into Rowan Stringer's death.

Rowan's Law has enjoyed massive support from Ontario, across Canada and in other parts of the world, with the federal government calling for a federal law that would emulate this bill. Just moments ago, Brains Worldwide International, based out of Austin, Texas, called for the swift passage of this bill.

What assurance will the government House leader give my constituents that this Liberal, NDP and Conservative bill will be called immediately for committee and third reading so Rowan's Law will be enacted?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Obviously, our thoughts and prayers are with the Stringer family and with all of Rowan's friends—because I know this has had a big impact on the friends and teammates that Rowan played with.

We at the Ministry of Education and other ministries that have been affected are reviewing the coroner's recommendations, and we'll respond directly to the Office of the Chief Coroner, but I want to thank the member and my colleagues the member from Ottawa South and the member from Kitchener-Waterloo—is that right?—all three parties' sponsorship, and obviously the member here.

The government will be supporting this bill. We believe that this is a good bill and that the structure that has been set up—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'd like to thank the Minister of Education for acknowledging her government's support, but the question actually is a process question to the government House leader.

Rowan Stringer's inquest took place over several weeks, with many expert witnesses forming the basis of those 49 recommendations. Many of those experts are here with us today, including Lisa Fischer, Charles Tator and Michael Sharpe, some of North America's leading concussion experts from right here in the province of Ontario. Other groups, like Coaches of Canada, Parachute Canada, the Ontario Athletic Therapist Association and Rugby Canada, are here today to see this bill through.

Given that a previous concussion bill, Bill 39, died on the order paper, and given that the inquest was both lengthy and substantive, the Stringers and our stakeholders reasonably expect that this bill would pass expeditiously so that the committee, which will be led by the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, can get moving.

So I'll go back to the minister of the House: At the very least, can you assure the Stringer family today that Rowan's Law will indeed pass the Legislative Assembly of Ontario?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I do want to update the House on what has happened. Since this came up as an issue, we have actually required all the school boards in the province to have a concussion law.

The Ontario Physical and Health Education Association, Ophea, has updated their concussion rules within

what's known as the Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines. That's a living document, and as a result of the coroner's inquest and of the work that Ophea has done and the experts that are here today, we look forward, as this bill moves forward and the advisory committee is set up, to continuing to update those guidelines, because we realize that there is more research, new research, and as that new research becomes available, we know we need to continue—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

1120

CHILD PROTECTION

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is for the Premier. The Auditor General found that the delays and cost overruns in bringing CPIN online for children's aid societies are being shouldered by the societies themselves and come out of their general operating budgets. That means less money to provide protection to children in care and more opportunities for them to fall through the cracks. A coroner's inquest into the death of Jeffrey Baldwin called for CPIN to be implemented in February 2014 because Jeffrey fell through those cracks.

Speaker, how does the minister explain how her government went from a commitment to implement the CPIN program in 47 children's aids at a cost of \$150 million in January 2016, to now saying the cost will be as much as \$200 million and it won't be implemented until 2020?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I want to thank my critic for the question on CPIN. As she knows, this was asked by the official opposition yesterday as well.

I first want to say again to this House that my ministry is acting on all the recommendations from the Auditor General, and we won't be stopping there, Speaker. I talked in the House about our action plan going forward.

When it comes to CPIN, this is a very important system. This essentially brings together 47 disparate IT systems into one Child Protection Information Network. Already we have 20% of the cases on file, and I expect 30% of the cases to be on file by the spring.

We're investing heavily in this system because it's about the protection and safety of our most vulnerable children in care. We already have 17 million child welfare files on the system and we will continue to support our front-line workers in making this an effective system for our children.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Miss Monique Taylor: Speaker, what the minister doesn't seem to realize is that bringing this money out of the operating budgets of children's aids is actually putting children at risk.

The problems with CPIN aren't just what the Auditor General identified. We know that the province's First Nations child welfare agencies, which are responsible for a large percentage of the province's wards, don't feel that

they've been consulted on CPIN, yet this government committed to consulting with First Nations child welfare providers and communities to reform the system by 2015.

Speaker, where is the urgency to reform the children's aid system in this province? How many Jeffrey Baldwins and Katelynn Sampsons do there have to be?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Speaker, the reason I'm committed to seeing CPIN come to fruition is because of the safety and protection of children in care. The reason I am committed to this is because I don't want more tragedies in our child welfare system.

It's very important that we get this right. The system must be perfectly correct as we go forward. We've had good progress, and we'll have more going forward.

I have met with the front-line workers who are working on CPIN, and it is a big-change process. We are continuing to invest in more supports, training and communications. I listened to the front-line workers; I listened to the leadership of children's aid. In fact, on Monday I'm meeting with the leadership of child welfare agencies and the association so we can talk about the Auditor General's recommendations and how they're feeling about CPIN.

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Mr. Han Dong: My question is to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. Last week I hosted one of the Culture Talks sessions in my riding of Trinity-Spadina, as part of the consultation process for Ontario's first cultural strategy. It was very well attended, Mr. Speaker. In attendance were representatives from arts organizations, artists, art patrons and other constituents. My local BIAs were represented, and the Dano festival, the Chinatown festival, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Design Exchange were represented as well.

It was a fantastic gathering filled with energy, excitement and deep conversations. Our discussions highlighted some of the things our government has done well and illustrated some of the next steps and opportunities.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Now that the Culture Talks consultations are complete, can you provide us with some more details about this initiative?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'm happy to respond to the member's question and thank him for his continued advocacy for arts and culture here in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, this is the first time a government has gone out and asked people what they think about culture in order to build a provincial-wide strategy. We know things are changing in culture with technology, and we've seen a lot of new art forms come forward. This is a sector that contributes \$22 billion to our economy and employs over 280,000 people.

We went out there and we spoke to people in 11 different parts of Ontario. We had smaller meetings with indigenous First Nation groups. We spoke to young people. What we did was we had these conversations—and I want to thank members from all sides of the House, because I know there are members on the other side who

had their own consultations, like the member from Leeds–Grenville and the member from Trinity–Spadina.

We got a lot of positive information. It's about building on the success that we have in Ontario and continuing to build our economy up through a strong culture sector.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Han Dong: I want to thank the minister for the good work he does in his ministry. I'm proud of the investment our government continues to make in the arts and culture sector.

The arts have a profound effect on our lives. For seniors, participating in the arts can lead to better health and well-being. Researchers have indicated that the presence of artists and art organizations reduces neighbourhood crime and delinquency. For children and youth, participating in arts can lead to better social skills, better grades in school and lower dropout rates. Cultural organizations build community identity and pride, and lead to increased tolerance, free expression and diversity.

Arts and culture strengthen the economy, attracting people to live in, visit and spend money in our communities.

Can the minister provide us with an indication of our government's next step on this initiative?

Hon. Michael Coteau: We've had these great conversations. We had over 1,000 people participate in person, and we had over 800 submissions—online submissions, written submissions and submissions coming in directly to the website. What we're going to do is we're going to take all that information, collect it, analyze it, come forward with a framework for the strategy, bring it back to Ontarians and get some more feedback, and we hope that by the end of June of next year, we will have the first-ever culture strategy here in the province of Ontario that reflects what Ontarians want.

This is about making sure that our government resources are aligned with what people want and that we can work towards building our economy, but, even more importantly, that we continue to build great culture that tells our story here in the province of Ontario.

FIRE SAFETY

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. This government and the Ontario fire marshal created a risk-based assessment tool for communities to use when evaluating fire services. Unfortunately, they created a tool that doesn't work. This is partly because they forgot to consult firefighters—the people who actually understand what is needed to keep communities safe. The assessment tool should be able to tell a community the level of fire service they need to get the job done. Instead, the tool doesn't say anything. It produces a number—not on a scale, or on a grid; just a number that means nothing. The vagueness of the tool puts public safety at risk.

So, Mr. Speaker, I suggest the solution is simple. Will this government put a hold on the use of the current tool,

consult firefighters and develop a tool that will keep communities safe?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: First of all, Speaker, I think the member opposite recognizes that fire safety is a very important responsibility that we take very seriously. The Office of the Fire Marshal, under the provincial legislation in our Fire Protection and Prevention Act, exercises his authority to ensure that we have the appropriate services available across the province.

On this particular issue around risk-based assessment tools, my understanding is that the tool was created with consultation, but I have had conversations with professional firefighters, as well, about their concerns. I have committed to them that I will work with them to ensure that that assessment tool is reflective of the reality, and that it ensures that our communities, our homes and our businesses are safe at all times.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Again, Mr. Speaker, back to the minister: Sault Ste. Marie believes they can operate with 20 less firefighters, who they plan to slash over the next three years. But how did they come to that number, and how do they know it won't affect public safety?

Common sense would tell me that 20 less firefighters means community safety is being put at risk, but this government refuses to create a proper risk-based assessment tool to guide municipalities in their decision-making. Communities are left to speculate if they have enough firefighters, or they're forced to spend thousands of dollars on consultants to find the answer.

1130

Why is this government afraid to offer a proper risk-based assessment tool, one that will actually help to ensure there are enough firefighters to ensure community safety?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I'm not going to start judging a decision of an elected body like the Sault Ste. Marie council; it's their decision. Of course, we require that fire safety, as required in the legislation, remains paramount.

I also want to thank the member from Sault Ste. Marie, who has also spoken to me about this matter before. I thank him for his advocacy in urging that I look into this matter carefully as well.

As I mentioned earlier, I've had conversations with Ontario's professional firefighters. I have committed to them that I look forward to working with them. My staff has already been engaged with them on this particular issue, and we will of course consult them and Ontario's municipalities to make sure that we have the right tools in place. But the key will remain that we need to make sure that our communities are safe at all times for fires. Our businesses depend on it; our residents depend on it.

HOME CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Today, over 2,000 patients in Whitby, Oshawa, Scarborough and across the Central East CCAC are stuck on a wait-list for home care. The Liberals like to say

they're committed to five-day home care, but they are forcing thousands of patients with high and moderate needs to wait an average of four months for personal support services.

Speaker, this is unacceptable. There is no way that any senior in Ontario, living alone and struggling to meet ends meet, should be forced to wait for home care that they desperately need. So why is this Premier ignoring literally thousands of patients and seniors in Whitby and across the region who need home care now, but have to wait months just to get it?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. It is unacceptable that individuals who are in serious need of support need to wait far too long to receive that. That's why we're acting. We're acting on the basis of three reports now that we've received this year. We introduced a 10-point action plan on home and community care in the spring. We're implementing 10 different recommendations to bring down those wait times.

There are more than 800,000 people across this province who, each and every year, access home care through our CCACs. We have hard-working front-line workers who are doing as much as they can.

I look forward in the coming weeks as well to releasing a discussion paper that is going to speak to additional changes, including structural changes that are needed to continue to improve the service that these individuals, and others like them, so badly need and deserve.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's not lost on anyone that the Liberals are actually waiting for the House to rise and the Christmas break to occur before they release that secret paper on home care. It's quite disappointing.

Seniors from Whitby to Peterborough are waiting hundreds of days for the home care they need. In schools across the region, there are over 3,000 students stuck on the wait-list for occupational therapy—more than 1,800 in Whitby alone. They're being forced to wait an average of 423 days for the support they need. Others are waiting two years for speech-language therapy. It means a child in grade 1 might actually get the support they need by the time they get to grade 3.

How can this Premier think it's acceptable to force children and seniors in Whitby and Oshawa to wait months, or even years, to get the support they need?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I know, and I understand, the reasons why the leader of the third party is focused on Whitby right now, but we're focused on the entire province, Mr. Speaker. Our goal is to make sure that we're providing that high-quality service to all Ontarians, wherever they reside. Whether in northern Ontario, southwestern Ontario, eastern Ontario or central Ontario, our obligation is the same to everybody.

I look forward to discussing with members of her caucus, once we release the discussion paper on home and community care, to see how we might work together

on creating a plan that invests in these people, treats them with dignity and respect, and provides them with that service that they deserve.

GO TRANSIT

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. In spring of this year, our government announced that we will be investing \$13.5 billion in improvements across the GO rail network as part of the regional express rail plan. A key component of delivering on this promise is eliminating the existing Davenport Diamond, one of the busiest rail crossings in North America.

I was proud to host Minister Del Duca in my riding this summer to discuss this important project and happy that he accepted, recognizing the importance of this project to my community. But many of my constituents continue to express real concerns about the potential impact that any change to this crossing could have on our community.

Can the minister please tell members of this House what he is doing to ensure that the voices of my residents of Davenport are being heard and that they are getting the best project possible?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'm very happy to take this question from my friend and colleague the member from Davenport. I know that I'll have the chance to provide a little bit more detail in the supplementary answer. I just wanted to use this opportunity to say that she is 100% right. She organized a town hall meeting in her community that took place during the summer that I was quite honoured to attend.

On this side of the House, there are, I think, 58 women and men who serve as strong champions for their communities. I want to pay tribute to all of them, but I want to pay particular tribute to the member from Davenport. This is not an easy issue to deal with as we continue to build up the infrastructure that we need in our province. It is expensive, it is time-consuming and it is disruptive to communities.

I know that the team at Metrolinx and at MTO will continue to work with residents in Davenport—especially because of the advocacy of this MPP from Davenport—to make sure that we produce an outcome that's better for the region, but also better for Davenport.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I want to thank the minister for his response. From the onset of this project, I have been committed to working with residents and all levels of government to ensure that our community is heard on this issue. I will also continue to champion modern and environmentally sound legacy pieces that properly represent our vibrant community—items which were also recommended by the residents' reference panel.

One of the things I continue to hear about from those in my community, and that I'm advocating for on their behalf, is their desire to have a GO station at Bloor and Lansdowne. Can the minister please provide members of this House and my community in Davenport with a status update on this station?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Again, I thank the member from Davenport for the follow-up question and the specific request.

People in this Legislature and people across Ontario have heard us say that the GO regional express rail plan will increase weekly trips across our entire GO rail network from the current 1,500 to nearly 6,000 trips. I said in my original answer that in order to get this right, in order to build the province up and build the infrastructure that we need—it is disruptive; we recognize that. That's why Metrolinx and MTO are working very hard with the member from Davenport.

Not that many weeks ago, Metrolinx identified that we had narrowed a list for future potential stations across the whole network down to 50. I recognize that in the spring or summer of 2016, we will confirm the final number. While I'm not in a position to confirm what might take place in Davenport, I know, and everyone on this side of the House knows, that that MPP from Davenport will continue to be a champion and she'll make sure that we get it right.

TAXATION

Mr. Steve Clark: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Last week, our PC caucus, with the help of thousands of realtors, home builders and hard-working Ontarians, slammed the door shut on this government's municipal land transfer tax grab. We fought hard to keep the home ownership dreams of young families in this province alive.

But Ontarians know this Liberal government all too well. Taxes are in their DNA and have climbed a staggering \$30.8 billion on their watch. Since we know a leopard can't change its spots, Ontarians are worried about what other taxes this minister has up his sleeve to pick their pockets.

Is the minister considering making the family car his next target by authorizing all municipalities to collect a vehicle registration tax?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I'd like to wish the member opposite a very merry Christmas. He deserves one, I think, after this session in the House.

I want to say very simply that I answered that question last week when I talked about the dialogue we're having with our municipal partners. I want to say to the member opposite that if he wants to propose that we don't allow municipalities to tax people who have baby kittens, I'd be pleased to stand in my place and say we're not going to do that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Steve Clark: Here we go again. I heard the same lines when I asked him about a land transfer tax scheme. For weeks, this minister claimed I was making it up—until he fessed up and backed off.

1140

Drivers in Ontario already pay \$10 billion every year to the provincial treasury through taxes and fees. What's more, this government's looming carbon tax and road

tolls make the commute to work an even more expensive one.

Enough is enough. Just like the MLTT, the buck stops with this minister. No more jokes—I want a straight answer. Does the minister feel drivers in this province already pay enough taxes and will he commit today that he won't let a new car tax out of the garage?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: This is too rich by three quarters, coming from a member of a previous government that did everything they possibly could to debilitate our municipal sector. It downloaded \$3.6 billion, and when municipalities complained about it and said that they were going to have a tough time making ends meet, they said, "Go raise taxes."

Thanks for the question.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Leader of the Opposition on a point of order.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Speaker, a point of order: I'd like to correct my record. During question period, I said GHG emissions rose by 171 megatonnes. They rose to 171 megatonnes during the Premier's first year in office.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That is a point of order and all members are allowed to correct the record.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Let's get through these quickly. I hope they're not things that I need to get moving on, because we've got two very important things to do.

The member from Nepean–Carleton on a point of order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate it. Merry Christmas again to all colleagues.

I just wanted to introduce my daughter, Victoria, and her friend Shannon who are here today to witness the Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I'm told that the member's daughter challenged her to a cart-wheel contest.

The member from Hamilton Mountain on a point of order.

Miss Monique Taylor: I would like to, on behalf of my caucus and the MPP for Welland, introduce Andy Roy, who is president of the NDP riding association in Welland. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mr. Mike Colle: A point of order, Mr. Speaker: There has been a lot of legislation just passed and that will be passed, but one important change took place, and I want to thank Dennis Clark, the Sergeant-at-Arms, for facilitating it. That is that my granddaughter was thrown out of the Legislature because she fell asleep on my daughter's lap. As a result of the intervention by the Sergeant-at-

Arms, children can fall asleep in the Legislature and not be thrown out again.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Huron–Bruce.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I hate to interrupt, but I've had the honour of having a University of Waterloo co-op student with me this past session. I just want to say thank you to Heather Bone.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Northumberland–Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: In conjunction with wishing you and the rest of the Legislature a happy Christmas and a festive season, I want to wish my good friend and neighbour Minister Leal a happy birthday in a couple of days.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): My friends, sad news: This is the last day for our pages, and we want to thank them for the wonderful work that they've done. Thank you.

Applause.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Leeds–Grenville has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing concerning a vehicle registration tax. The matter will be debated on February 16, 2016.

DEFERRED VOTES

EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'EMPLOI ET LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 109, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour / Projet de loi 109, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi et les relations de travail.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1145 to 1150.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Would all members please take their seats?

On December 9, 2015, Mr. Flynn moved third reading of Bill 109, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia
Anderson, Granville	Hoggarth, Ann	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Arnott, Ted	Hoskins, Eric	Naqvi, Yasir
Bailey, Robert	Hunter, Mitzie	Nicholls, Rick
Baker, Yvan	Jaczek, Helena	Oraziotti, David
Balkissoon, Bas	Jones, Sylvia	Pettapiece, Randy
Ballard, Chris	Kiwala, Sophie	Potts, Arthur
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Lalonde, Marie-France	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bradley, James J.	Leal, Jeff	Rinaldi, Lou
Brown, Patrick	MacCharles, Tracy	Sandals, Liz
Chan, Michael	MacLaren, Jack	Scott, Laurie
Chiarelli, Bob	MacLeod, Lisa	Sergio, Mario
Clark, Steve	Malhi, Harinder	Smith, Todd
Colle, Mike	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Coteau, Michael	Martins, Cristina	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crack, Grant	Martow, Gila	Thibeault, Glenn
Damerla, Dipika	Matthews, Deborah	Thompson, Lisa M.
Del Duca, Steven	Mauro, Bill	Vernile, Daiene
Delaney, Bob	McGarry, Kathryn	Walker, Bill
Dhillon, Vic	McMahon, Eleanor	Wilson, Jim
Dong, Han	McMeekin, Ted	Wong, Soo
Duguid, Brad	McNaughton, Monte	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Fedeli, Victor	Meilleur, Madeleine	Yakubski, John
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milczyn, Peter Z.	Yurek, Jeff
Fraser, John	Miller, Norm	Zimmer, David
Gravelle, Michael,	Moridi, Reza	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Gretzky, Lisa	Sattler, Peggy
DiNovo, Cheri	Hatfield, Percy	Singh, Jagmeet
Fife, Catherine	Hillier, Randy	Taylor, Monique
French, Jennifer K.	Horwath, Andrea	Vanthof, John
Gates, Wayne	Mantha, Michael	
Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 77; the nays are 16.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

BUDGET MEASURES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 144, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact or amend certain other statutes / Projet de loi 144, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter ou à modifier d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1154 to 1155.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On December 9, 2015, Mr. Bradley moved third reading of Bill 144, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact or amend certain other statutes. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Fraser, John	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Anderson, Granville	Gravelle, Michael	Moridi, Reza
Baker, Yvan	Hoggarth, Ann	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoskins, Eric	Naqvi, Yasir
Ballard, Chris	Hunter, Mitzie	Oraziotti, David
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jaczek, Helena	Potts, Arthur
Bradley, James J.	Kiwala, Sophie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chan, Michael	Lalonde, Marie-France	Rinaldi, Lou
Chiarelli, Bob	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Colle, Mike	MacCharles, Tracy	Sergio, Mario
Coteau, Michael	Malhi, Harinder	Sousa, Charles
Crack, Grant	Mangat, Amrit	Takhar, Harinder S.
Damerla, Dipika	Martins, Cristina	Thibeault, Glenn
Del Duca, Steven	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Wong, Soo
Dhillon, Vic	McGarry, Kathryn	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dong, Han	McMahon, Eleanor	Zimmer, David
Duguid, Brad	McMeekin, Ted	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Meilleur, Madeleine	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Harris, Michael	Nicholls, Rick
Bailey, Robert	Hatfield, Percy	Pettapiece, Randy
Barrett, Toby	Hillier, Randy	Sattler, Peggy
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Brown, Patrick	Hudak, Tim	Singh, Jagmeet
Clark, Steve	Jones, Sylvia	Smith, Todd
DiNovo, Cheri	MacLaren, Jack	Taylor, Monique
Fedeli, Victor	MacLeod, Lisa	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fife, Catherine	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
French, Jennifer K.	Martow, Gila	Walker, Bill
Gates, Wayne	McNaughton, Monte	Wilson, Jim
Gélinas, France	Miller, Norm	Yakubski, John
Gretzky, Lisa	Miller, Paul	Yurek, Jeff
Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 55; the nays are 41.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

1200

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, Her Honour awaits.

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario entered the chamber of the Legislative Assembly and took her seat upon the throne.

ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

Hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell (Lieutenant Governor): Please be seated.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly of the province has, at its present meetings thereof, passed certain bills to which, in the name of and on behalf of the said Legislative Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The following are the titles of the bills to which Your Honour's assent is prayed:

An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to tips and other gratuities / Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne les pourboires et autres gratifications.

An Act to reduce the abuse of fentanyl patches and other controlled substance patches / Loi visant à réduire l'abus de timbres de fentanyl et d'autres timbres de substances désignées.

An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour / Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi et les relations de travail.

An Act to amend the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Act, 2007 with respect to notices of serious bodily harm or death / Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur l'intervenant provincial en faveur des enfants et des jeunes en ce qui concerne les avis de décès ou de blessures graves.

An Act to amend the Mental Health Act and the Health Care Consent Act, 1996 / Loi visant à modifier la Loi sur la santé mentale et la Loi de 1996 sur le consentement aux soins de santé.

An Act to require research to be undertaken and programs to be developed for pregnancy loss and infant death and to proclaim October 15 as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day / Loi exigeant des recherches et des programmes sur les pertes de grossesse et les décès néonataux et proclamant le 15 octobre Journée de sensibilisation au deuil périnatal.

An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact or amend certain other statutes / Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter ou à modifier d'autres lois.

An Act to recognize the corporate structure of the Métis Nation of Ontario by enacting the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act, 2015 / Loi visant à reconnaître la structure juridique de la nation métisse de l'Ontario par l'édiction de la Loi de 2015 sur le Secrétariat de la nation métisse de l'Ontario.

An Act to revive 422504 Ontario Ltd.

An Act to revive The Gage Research Institute.

An Act to revive Zara H.S.L.C.C Inc.

An Act to revive 1170517 Ontario Inc.

An Act to revive Larry Blake Limited.

An Act to revive Bayview Farms and Enterprises Limited.

An Act to revive 563523 Ontario Limited.

An Act to revive 1064514 Ontario Inc.

An Act to revive Precision Pipe Manufacturing Inc.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): In Her Majesty's name, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor doth assent to these bills.

Au nom de Sa Majesté, Son Honneur la lieutenante-gouverneure sanctionne ces projets de loi.

Hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell (Lieutenant Governor): If I may, Mr. Speaker and Premier, just say to all of you in the House: Thank you for your public service to the end of this year, and a very warm set of good wishes for health, happiness and prosperity in this House and in your homes, in the year to come. Thank you so much.

Her Honour was then pleased to retire.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just before we recess, I offer you my personal thanks, save and except for the wonderful experience I have during question period.

I would offer you my heartfelt merry Christmas, season's greetings, happy new year to you, your family, your staff here, your staff in your ridings, and I want to express my gratitude and, I'm sure, ours to the entire staff here at the Legislature.

Merry Christmas to everybody.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And, of course, our visitors. Thank you.

There are no further—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's it. We've already done that. There are no further matters. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1207 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Soo Wong: Speaker, I have a lot of guests visiting Queen's Park this afternoon, so I'm going to read my guests who are coming in shortly: Bejoy Das, Prat Das, Jiao Jiang, Betty Wu-Lawrence, May Wong, Howard So, Lenard Walker, Sylvia and George Pusey, Eva Yeung, Pui-Chun Fong, Shang-Ren Huang, Feng-Ying Xu, Rui-Yun Zhao, Sau-Kiu Yeung, Mee-Ling Tam, Xi-Ling Xu, Zi-Jin Zhao, Wen-Yao Weng, Yue-Ying Chen, Yong-Qiang Li; Jo-Anne Linton, my executive assistant; Fiona Su, as well as Sam Wong from my constituency office; and Maria Choi and Sherilyn Hu from Mount Sinai Hospital Wellness Centre.

Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of constituents who can't come because they are professional people. They are watching today, and I want to introduce them as well: Larissa Tam, obstetrician and gynecologist from Scarborough Hospital; Susan Eng of CARP; Suzanne Brake and Carol Snelgrove from the province of Newfoundland's Office of Neglected Adults; Wilson Chiu, Regina Huang and Agnes Lau at Vintage Garden; Diane Duncan, St. Paul's L'Amoreaux Centre; Samantha Chambers and Amanda Falotico from the GAIN program; Helen Leung at Carefirst; Gurprit Matharu at TransCare; Gilbert Ching from Bank of Nova Scotia; Scarborough pharmacist Rahim Ismail; Dr. Joel Sadavoy,

head of geriatric psychiatry at Mount Sinai Hospital and the Wellness Centre; Allan Malek, senior vice-president of the Ontario Pharmacists Association; Susan McNeill, Anastasia Harripaul and Verity White from the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario; Frank Bevilacqua and Dr. Raffy Chouljian of the Ontario Dental Association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you to our guests. That's the first time I have ever heard a filibuster for introduction of guests. It's interesting.

Further introduction of guests?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: It's my pleasure to welcome to Queen's Park today Thelma McGillivray of the Burlington chapter of the council of university women and the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario; and Ancilla Ho-Young who's a nurse at Nina's Place, and the Halton Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Centre based at Joseph Brant Hospital. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Ted Arnott: As members of this House know, for some time we have been advocating for a Highway 6 Morriston bypass in the township of Puslinch. However, Morriston is not the only community in my riding in need of a bypass. On December 7, I tabled a resolution in this House calling on the Minister of Transportation to place a Highway 7 Acton bypass project on the southern highways program, MTO's five-year plan for highway construction.

This bypass is badly needed, due to the increasing volume of truck traffic that is making its way along Highway 7 through Acton's narrow downtown. The need for a long-term truck strategy, including the possibility of an Acton bypass, is strongly supported by Halton Hills mayor Rick Bonnette and town council. I want to commend them for their leadership on this issue. Mayor Bonnette, council and staff are proposing a partnership with the Ministry of Transportation to develop a plan to deal with the problem of truck traffic through urban areas of Halton Hills, including Acton, Georgetown and Norval. I support the town's efforts and am working with them.

The government is promising \$134 billion in infrastructure spending over a 10-year period; \$16 billion has been set aside for the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. Halton Hills is in the GTA, and we need to know where we are on this list.

Last week, I approached the minister to request a meeting to discuss these issues. The minister was very receptive, and this week his staff responded to my office. We have arranged a meeting for January 20 at Queen's Park. I've invited Mayor Bonnette and council to join us, as well as Halton regional chair Gary Carr. I hope that the other Halton-area MPPs can attend as well.

Working together, we can make progress.

JAY KEDDY

Miss Monique Taylor: Last Wednesday, December 3, just before 6 p.m., Jay Kedy was riding his bike up the Claremont Access in Hamilton when he was struck by a truck and died at the scene.

Jay was one of those people who make our city a community. He was an elementary teacher who took an active interest in the lives as well as the education of the children that he served. Jay worked at Prince of Wales school in the lower city and lived on the mountain, in my riding. He was an avid, careful cyclist and was no stranger to the route he was taking; he cycled to school each and every day.

He was also an active member of the West Highland Baptist Church, where he was a deacon and board member.

At the time of the tragedy, Jay was on his way from cheering on the school volleyball team to a prayer meeting at the church. He had a profound commitment to his faith at home and abroad. In fact, he and his wife Ingrid spent time as missionaries in Africa.

I knew Jay personally. He volunteered in my campaigns, and it was always a delight to see him walk through the door of the campaign office, often still wearing his bike helmet. I saw his dedication to the job at hand and his willingness to take on any task—just the type of person you want on your team. I know he brought the same commitment to all of his other endeavours.

He will be missed by many, and our city is a poorer place with his loss. Our thoughts are with his family.

COMMOTIONS CÉRÉBRALES

M. John Fraser: J'aimerais prendre un moment pour vous encourager à appuyer le projet de loi 149 cet après-midi.

Ce projet de loi a été motivé par des circonstances tragiques. En mai 2013, à l'âge de 17 ans, Rowan Stringer a subi trois commotions cérébrales en quelques jours, la dernière étant fatale.

Rowan était une personne généreuse et courageuse. Avant sa mort, elle s'est inscrite au Réseau Trillium pour le don de vie. Cette décision a amélioré la vie de plusieurs jeunes Ontariens et Ontariennes.

De plus, ses parents, Gordon et Kathleen, ont décidé de faire ce qu'ils ont pu pour sensibiliser le public aux conséquences des commotions cérébrales. Grâce à leurs efforts, une enquête du coroner a été formée. Les recommandations de cette enquête ont inspiré la création d'un comité législatif. Parmi d'autres éléments, le comité consultatif étudiera comment les entraîneurs, les joueurs et les parents sont éduqués sur les commotions cérébrales dans les sports.

La loi Rowan aiderait à assurer que tous les Ontariens, particulièrement les enfants et les jeunes adultes, participeront à des activités physiques en sécurité. Pour cette raison, je vous encourage d'appuyer ce projet de loi.

DUTCH TREATS

Mrs. Julia Munro: Every community has local small businesses that quickly become a community staple. I rise today to recognize one such establishment in my riding of York-Simcoe, Dutch Treats.

This year, Dutch Treats in Bradford celebrated 60 years. Cor Den Bleker and his wife Louise have owned and operated this business for the last 10 years. The Den Blekers are the fourth owners of Dutch Treats since its 1955 opening. For context, Leslie Frost was Premier and Louis St. Laurent Was Prime Minister.

What makes this restaurant so special is its long-standing tradition in the community. In fact, the Den Blekers were customers long before they became owners. What started as a local gathering place for the Dutch community is now a specialty shop and café enjoyed by all.

1310

While the years have come and gone, the food has remained delicious and traditional. On a more personal note, my favourite is our oliebollen. This is enjoyed by the Dutch to celebrate New Year's.

Small business owners are vital to Ontario's economy, Ontario's communities and Ontario's character. According to a recent report, only 9% of small business owners in Canada believe their Premier understands the realities of running a small business; 59% of Canadian small business owners say that provincial taxes discourage them from growing their business.

While I am delighted to see a thriving small business in Bradford, I worry about the many other small businesses in my riding and across Ontario and their opportunity to succeed. It's important to stand up for small business in Ontario so that others may have the same opportunity for success that Dutch Treats has had. If you are ever in Bradford, I encourage you to stop by for a snack.

HISTORY OF LAW IN WINDSOR AND
ESSEX COUNTY

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It is my pleasure to rise one last time before the session breaks to speak to yet another community-building initiative in my riding of Windsor West.

Justice Douglas W. Phillips of the Ontario Court of Justice has helped unite the legal community of Windsor and Essex county. Over the past few years, he poured tremendous time and resources into creating a history of law by way of beautiful and informative display boards on the walls of the courthouse at 200 Chatham Street East in Windsor.

The display outlines the history of law in Windsor and Essex county and recognizes the achievements of many legal professionals and community leaders throughout history who have helped shaped our community through their legal work and local initiatives. The display helps demonstrate that the legal history of Windsor is inter-

twined with the development and growth of our region. Having toured this display over the summer, I can honestly say that the history of law and those who contributed to its development is nothing short of inspiring.

I'm proud to be from an area that recognizes the contributions of our legal professionals and community activists. Thank you to Justice Phillips and all law enthusiasts who contributed to this community-building project.

JIM CHAPLIN

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I rise today on behalf of my constituents of Cambridge to pay tribute to the extraordinary life of Jim Chaplin, who left us after a 12-year battle with Parkinson's disease.

A leader in business, politics and community philanthropy throughout his 82 years—many people felt they had a connection with Jim.

Jim dedicated his life to giving back to our community. The Chaplin Family YMCA is an enduring example of Jim's legacy to Cambridge. As president of the Cambridge Y from 1964 to 1974, he guided the Y through difficult times and gave a large donation that enabled the Y to build its current facility. He stayed involved long after his service as president, and in 2005, he became the recipient of YMCA Canada's highest award, the Fellowship of Honour.

He helped to build the Bridges, a homeless shelter that assists our less-fortunate citizens. He was also honoured as a Mel Osborne Fellow in 1996 by the Kiwanis of Cambridge for outstanding service to the community.

Jim also headed up his family business of Canadian General-Tower. Under his capable leadership, it grew into a multi-million dollar manufacturing company that employs over 400 people and is renowned for its quality in countries across the globe.

Politics was a lifelong interest, and he served as city councillor and deputy mayor. In the words of one of his daughters, Joan Fisk, "Jim was a dedicated family man who loved to wear cashmere sweaters that earned him many hugs from his large family."

To his wife, Daisy: -We will always remember him. Rest in peace, Jim.

CARPOOLING

Mr. Tim Hudak: I don't know if you know this, but the member for Haldimand-Norfolk, Toby Barrett, has hitchhiked to 60 different countries. He spent a lot of years hitchhiking—from 1968 to 1973. While Toby has now traded in his thumb for his votes in the Legislature and his beat-up jeans for a suit, technology has changed a lot too.

So let me tell you about BlancRide. BlancRide is a Toronto-based app that helps take the era of hitching a ride with somebody from using your thumb to using your smart phone. It will help connect passengers with drivers, whether they're coming into Toronto from Mississauga

or going from Niagara to London. It's a great new technology, and it's Canadian-born, here in the GTA.

The CEO, Hamid Akbari, was a professor at the Oshawa institute of technology. He's sitting in traffic one day on the DVP, and he looks around and he sees so many cars with single passengers in them that he decides he'll do something about it, and he invents a technology.

Now, when I talk to Mr. Akbari or to his team, they tell me there are still provincial rules that are standing in the way. For example, if you want to take more than one round trip in a day, you're actually prohibited by laws that come from the 1970s instead of 2015. Similarly, our laws dealing with compensation are restricting this opportunity.

If we want to grow companies like this, if we want to see them become the Uber of carpooling and create jobs here in Ontario, we need to update our laws. They've got great ideas and I fully support them. I hope the government will agree and create some jobs right here.

NANJING MASSACRE ANNIVERSARY

Mr. Han Dong: I rise today to commemorate the 78th anniversary of the Nanjing Massacre. This incident marks a dark, solemn period in the history of China.

The massacre began December 13, 1937, during the Second Sino-Japanese War. Over a period of six weeks, 200,000 to 300,000 people, including both injured soldiers and civilians, were murdered in Nanjing, the then capital of China. Nanjing was left in ruins. It took decades for the city to recover from these violent attacks.

I had the opportunity to visit the city of Nanjing with the Premier just a few weeks ago. I was moved by the Nanjing Massacre memorial that was built to commemorate those who lost their lives. This memorial pays tribute to the resilience of the Chinese people and humanity. It reminds us that life is beautiful and invaluable.

Many community events will be taking place across Ontario commemorating the Nanjing Massacre this coming weekend. I encourage the members of this House to attend these events and learn more about the Nanjing Massacre.

Lastly, to all members of this House and to all Ontarians, merry Christmas and have a happy new year. We are truly blessed to be in this province.

SEASONAL EVENTS

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: It is a pleasure to rise today to wish my constituents and all Ontario residents a safe and happy holiday season.

The festive season is alive and well in my riding of Halton. Every year, I have the pleasure of attending close to four Santa Claus parades, several tree-lighting ceremonies, some major toy drives and a number of local holiday cheer events. It is an honour to be invited to these wonderful festive gatherings, and I want to thank the towns and chambers of Milton, Oakville, Campbellville and the city of Burlington for their part in organizing

these great celebrations. I'd also like to thank the countless volunteers and organizers who work tirelessly to make these gatherings a success.

I was honoured to kick off the holiday season as a judge at the Milton Santa Claus Parade. I also had the pleasure of riding in both the Oakville and Burlington Santa Claus Parades recently, along with my colleague the MPP from Burlington.

You know, Mr. Speaker, participating in a parade gives you a unique perspective. It is a privilege to see the smiling faces of so many children. It's also wonderful to see great community spirit as friends and neighbours gather around barbecues, on lawns or on porches to celebrate the holiday season. I'm now looking forward to the upcoming Campbellville parade and Milton's popular Miracle on Main Street event, a great toy drive for needy kids and their families. And coming up this weekend is my second annual family skating party at Milton Memorial Arena.

This is a wonderful time of year. It's also a time for generosity and to give to those who may need extra help. I'd like to wish all of those friends and families out there, once again, happy holidays and merry Christmas.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

SELECT COMMITTEE ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I beg leave to present the final report from the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ms. Vernile presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to say to you and to the House that it was such an honour and a privilege to chair the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment. I'm very proud of this comprehensive report with its recommendations. There are 67 recommendations in all.

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I do want to thank all the members of the all-party committee who united together in a non-partisan environment to work in unison on a very difficult issue. I'd like to mention them, if I could: the members for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, Dufferin-Caledon, London West, Essex, Trinity-Spadina, Brampton-Springdale, Ottawa-Orléans, Cambridge, and Burlington. I also want to recognize the staff of the Clerk's office for their patience and their hard work; they were on this journey with us from the start.

Most of all, Mr. Speaker, I think that we need to thank the many people in the nine communities across Ontario

that we visited who shared their expertise and their personal stories with us. It wasn't easy for many of them to come forward and to relive their experiences of sexual violence and harassment, but they did so hoping for some kind of positive outcome, and we don't want to let them down.

Our committee is hopeful that the recommendations in this report are going to be implemented, and I thank everyone.

I move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MICRODISTILLERS ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LES MICRODISTILLATEURS

Mr. Hudak moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 157, An Act to amend the Liquor Control Act and the Liquor Licence Act / Projet de loi 157, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les alcools et la Loi sur les permis d'alcool.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Tim Hudak: The short title is the Microdistillers Act. Before I talk about the bill, I just wanted to thank the legislative drafter, Bradley Warden, who's a Niagara boy himself—he did a great job, and I thank him for his work here in the Legislature—and Matt Russell, who is an intern in my office from Brock who helped develop the bill.

It amends the Liquor Control Act by adding a new definition called a "microdistiller." Like other bills have done with microbreweries and with cideries, it sets a lower mark-up to help small microdistillers compete and to grow and hopefully create some new jobs.

There are four basic additional powers that would be given to a microdistiller under the act. If they have multiple licences for spirits, beer or wine, they could sell all three at their location. Right now, you cannot. It sets the ceiling for a microdistiller at 625,000 litres of spirits annually. That's a comparable level of alcohol sold to the current cap on microbreweries.

It would allow for direct delivery, so if a microdistiller, like Dillon's in my riding, wanted to send a bottle of vodka to a local restaurant they could do so directly, as opposed to going back and forth to Toronto to the LCBO warehouse.

Fourth—and this will probably surprise members of the House—it would allow microdistillers to actually sell a glass of their product on-site. Right now, they cannot. With a winery or brewhouse, you can sell a glass; you

cannot for spirits. This would get them to a level playing field.

PETITIONS

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Canadian individuals seek out medical practitioners providing service in Canada to treat and remedy a wide variety of ailments that an individual experiences throughout their lifetime;

"Whereas Health Canada and CCRA have an authorized list of medical practitioners whose payment for services are eligible for an individual to claim on their individual Canadian tax return as a medical deduction;

"Whereas all other medical practitioners not identified on the 'authorized medical practitioners' list whose payment for services are then by this definition not eligible for an individual tax deduction claim by the recipient of their services;

"Whereas an 'authorized medical practitioner' refers their patients out to a specialist that may or may not be on the 'authorized list of medical practitioners' but does so as a necessary part of the patient's treatment plan;

"Whereas the practitioner who receives the referral from the 'authorized medical practitioner' and renders their service to the referred patient and is not identified on the 'authorized medical practitioner' list will not have the payment for their services recognized as an eligible tax deduction for the patient by CCRA;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That where a medical practitioner who is identified as an 'authorized medical practitioner' for the purposes of having the payments for their services qualify as an eligible expense for the purposes of an individual tax deduction in Canada, provides a written referral to a patient to seek out the services of a medical practitioner which is not identified on the list of 'authorized medical practitioners' the payment for their services should be eligible as a tax deduction by the patient who has received these services by virtue of the referral."

It's signed by a significant number of constituents around my riding, and in adjacent communities as well.

PARTNER ASSAULT RESPONSE PROGRAM

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario called "Halt the Changes to Partner Assault Response." It reads as follows:

"Whereas Partner Assault Response (PAR) is the only government-funded program designed to change the behaviours of men who abuse; and

"Whereas the Liberal government has created a crisis in PAR by arbitrarily reducing the length of the program from 16 weeks to 12 weeks, without any research to support this change; and

"Whereas the changes to PAR were made contrary to the advice provided to the government by violence-against-women experts, front-line agencies, PAR providers, and provincial leaders across the sector; and

"Whereas the 2009 report of the Domestic Violence Advisory Council recommended that PAR be enhanced to include voluntary access and differentiated interventions as part of a comprehensive strategy to end violence against women;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of the Attorney General immediately halt the changes to PAR until a comprehensive review of the program can be conducted based on full and meaningful consultation with PAR providers and violence-against-women sector organizations and agencies."

I fully support this petition. I will affix my name to it and give it to page Ross to take to the table.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: On behalf of my colleague the member from Ottawa Centre, I would like to bring to the Legislative Assembly a petition:

"Whereas the process popularly known as 'declawing' is actually an amputation, that is the equivalent of cutting off a human's fingers from the knuckle up;

"Whereas the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association considers 'declawing' to be an unnecessary cosmetic procedure;

"Whereas research has shown that declawing a cat significantly reduces a cat's quality of life and leads to behavioural and health problems;

"Whereas declawing eliminates a cat's ability to defend itself when in danger; and

"Whereas the process is considered to be inhumane and is banned in more than 40 countries;

"Whereas vets, unfortunately, encourage cat owners to declaw cats for the sake of money without discussing with them the consequences of the procedure, and do not offer them other humane alternatives;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To ban the unnecessary and inhumane procedure known as 'declawing,' and/or tendonectomy, in the province of Ontario."

I agree with this petition. I sign it and give it to page Keana.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Robert Bailey: This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I agree with this petition and will send it to the table with Taylor.

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HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Before I read my petition, just a point of order: I just wanted to let folk know that if anybody is here for the parent equality bill, it will be debated at 3:10 p.m. I just wanted to let folk know because I suspect that some folk are here for that. Thank you.

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I agree with this and I'm going to give it to Ross to bring to the table.

GO TRANSIT

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I've got a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Cambridge, Ontario, is a municipality of over 125,000 people, many of whom commute into the greater Toronto area daily;

"Whereas the current commuting options available for travel between the Waterloo region and the GTA are inefficient and time-consuming, as well as environmentally damaging;

"Whereas the residents of Cambridge and the Waterloo region believe that they would be well-served by commuter rail transit that connects the region to the Milton line, and that this infrastructure would have positive, tangible economic benefits to the province of Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Direct crown agency Metrolinx to commission a feasibility study into building a rail line that connects the city of Cambridge to the GO train station in Milton, and to complete this study in a timely manner and communicate the results to the municipal government of Cambridge."

I agree with the petition, affix my signature and give it to page Lauren to bring down.

DISASTER RELIEF

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition in support of the people of Gogama. It reads as follows:

"Whereas at 2 a.m., March 7th, 2015, a Canadian National train derailed outside of the village of Gogama;

"Whereas this derailment caused numerous tank cars carrying crude oil to explode, catch fire and spill over one million litres of crude oil into the Makami River;

"Whereas the fire spewed toxic black smoke for over 24 hours, spreading ash and residue throughout the surrounding area;

"Whereas no one has given a clear answer on whether or not the fish caught downriver from the derailment site is safe to eat; and

"Whereas this was CN's third northern Ontario derailment in" the period of "a month;"

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario ... to "help the people of Gogama and Mattagami First Nation get fair and just compensation from CN."

I fully support this petition, affix my name to it and ask Benjamin to bring it to the Clerk.

LUNG HEALTH

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is

estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry's private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

"Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage."

I support the petition. I'll give my petition to page Megan Faith.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Catherine Fife: "Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

It's my pleasure to affix my signature to this petition and give it to page Ross.

LUNG HEALTH

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes), lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in

direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry's private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

"Once debated at committee to expedite" the process through to final reading.

I agree with it, affix my signature and give it to page Rachael to bring down.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I'm very proud to sign my name and give this to page Brooke.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Paul Miller: "Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I agree with this, will sign the petition and send it with Megan Faith.

GO TRANSIT

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the residents of the municipality of Clarington have been promised that the GO train would be extended to Courtice and Bowmanville;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario keep its promise to Clarington residents and commit to providing the necessary funding for Metrolinx to complete the extension of the GO train to Courtice and Bowmanville no later than 2018."

I agree with this, affix my name and give it to Prasanna to bring to the table.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time for petitions has expired.

The Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: On a point of order, Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent to revert back to motions.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The Minister of Children and Youth Services is seeking unanimous consent to revert back to motions. Agreed?

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MOTIONS

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: First up, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the appointment of an Acting Integrity Commissioner.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Is there consent? Agreed.

Go ahead.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I move that an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:

"We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, request the appointment of Cathryn Motherwell as Acting Integrity Commissioner for the province of Ontario as provided in section 23(6) of the Members'

Integrity Act, 1994, chapter 38, to hold office under the terms and conditions of the said act, commencing January 1, 2016, until January 31, 2016."

And that the address be engrossed and presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council by the Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Minister MacCharles moves that an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:

"We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, request the appointment of Cathryn Motherwell as Acting Integrity Commissioner for the province of Ontario as provided in section 23(6) of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, chapter 38, to hold office under the terms and conditions of the said act, commencing January 1, 2016, until January 31, 2016."

And that the address be engrossed and presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council by the Speaker.

Shall the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

APPOINTMENT OF INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Speaker, I believe we also have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the appointment of the Integrity Commissioner.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The minister is requesting unanimous consent to put forward a motion. Agreed? Agreed.

Minister?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I move that an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:

"We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, request the appointment of the Honourable David Wake as the Integrity Commissioner for a term of five years, commencing on February 1, 2016, as provided in section 23 of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, chapter 38."

And that the address be engrossed and presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council by the Speaker.

I will provide this to page Rachael.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Minister MacCharles moves that an humble—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Dispense? Agreed? Dispensed.

Shall the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

WEARING OF WRISTBANDS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Ottawa South on a point of order.

Mr. John Fraser: Point of order: I would like to ask for unanimous consent for members to be able to wear

wristbands in this afternoon's debate, in support of Rowan's Law.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested unanimous consent to wear a wristband. Do we agree? Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE SENIORS IN THE COMMUNITY ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION DES PERSONNES ÂGÉES VULNÉRABLES DANS LA COLLECTIVITÉ

Ms. Wong moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 148, An Act to amend the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 and the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 / Projet de loi 148, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur la prise de décisions au nom d'autrui et la Loi de 1991 sur les professions de la santé réglementées.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Soo Wong: It is an honour to rise this afternoon to speak on second reading of my private member's bill, Bill 148, An Act to amend the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 and the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991.

If passed, the Substitute Decisions Act will be amended to require regulated health professionals to report any reasonable suspicion that a senior is being abused or neglected to the public guardian and trustee office. This office is then required to investigate in order to determine whether an application for a temporary guardian is warranted.

This requirement applies even if the information is confidential or privileged, unless the information is subjected to solicitor-client privilege. No proceeding may commence against a regulated health professional for making a report in good faith. Coercion, intimidation, dismissal or penalization of regulated health professionals who make a report is prohibited. A health professional who contravenes this act is guilty of an offence and liable, on conviction, to a fine of not more than \$25,000 or imprisonment for not more than two years, or both.

If passed, the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, will be amended to make it an act of professional misconduct for a regulated health professional who fails to report a reasonable suspicion that a senior is being abused or neglected, as required by the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992.

To begin the discussion on Bill 148, I will put the issue in context. In 2015, for the first time, there are more seniors 65 and over than children under the age of 15, both in Ontario and across Canada. In Ontario, there are

currently more than two million seniors aged 65 and over—approximately 15% of the population. This number is expected to double in the next 25 years. The majority of the seniors, like today, will live in the community. Current Ontario legislations protect seniors living in either long-term-care facilities or retirement homes. Both incorporate the residents' bill of rights and mandate abuse prevention, investigation and reporting.

Bill 148, if passed, will ensure that all seniors living in the community have protection and support by requiring regulated health professionals to report elder abuse or neglect. In the proposed Bill 148, abuse is defined as physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, financial or systemic abuse of a senior. Neglect is defined as failure "to provide care, assistance, guidance or attention to the senior which causes or is reasonably likely to cause serious physical or psychological harm to the senior, or substantial damage to or substantial loss of a significant part of the senior's property, within a short period of time, unless the failure to provide care, assistance, guidance or attention is medically advisable."

According to Elder Abuse Ontario, between 40,000 and 200,000 seniors living in Ontario have experienced or are experiencing elder abuse. Elder abuse reoccurs in up to 80% of the cases. Numerous studies showed that abuse against seniors takes many forms and is often perpetrated by family members. Approximately 43% of perpetrators were their adult child. The second most likely family member identified as a perpetrator of family violence against seniors was the individual's spouse.

Financial and emotional abuse are the most frequently reported elder abuse cases. According to the government of Canada's justice department, many seniors may not report to the police but may disclose to health professionals, community groups and financial institutions. PC Patricia Fleischmann, of Toronto police, told me that elder abuse is one of the most underreported hidden crimes in the city of Toronto. Victims are often reluctant to report elder abuse due to fear of repercussions; a feeling of shame or guilt associated with reporting the abuser, who may be a relative; financial or emotional dependence on the abuser; fear of the loss of contact with the abuser; and fear or reluctance to relocate to an unfamiliar environment.

Victims may normalize the abusive behaviour or mistakenly believe that they have done something wrong to cause the abuse. They may lack the cognitive ability to report or may not know where to seek assistance. Language barrier, immigration issues and past neglect or abuse may contribute to the underreporting.

Elder abuse cases vary greatly in severity and, in extreme cases, have gained national attention; for example, a 2011 case where an elderly Scarborough woman who suffered from dementia was found in critical condition after her son and daughter-in-law moved her to live in an uninsulated garage for the winter. When the police responded to this call, they found the elderly victim unresponsive and unconscious.

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Then there was a case in 2014 of an Orillia woman who was confined in a dark room, dehydrated and suffering from a broken hip. This victim, a retired nurse, was abused and neglected by her daughter and son-in-law. She suffered from significant brain and organ damage from the lack of food and water. She died shortly after being found.

In 2014, Toronto police charged a couple for elder abuse. It was the victim's pharmacist who reported the potential abuse to the police which led to the investigation and subsequent charges against the couple.

These tragic cases clearly demonstrate a need for this Legislature to address elder abuse in the community. The Ontario government has taken a number of steps to keep seniors healthy, active, safe and independent in their community. In 2013, the government launched their action plan for seniors. Currently, there is provincial e-learning training on elder abuse mandated for uniformed Ontario Provincial Police members. The seniors' secretariat offers a number of initiatives, like the Seniors Community Grant Program and the Age-Friendly Community Planning Grant program, encouraging greater social inclusion, volunteerism and community engagement. Recently, the seniors' secretariat completed their round table on the elder abuse strategy to improve efficiency and effectiveness in early identification, prevention and response to elder abuse.

Although the province has taken significant measures to support seniors, we do not have comprehensive legislation like the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, which is recognized as a leader in abuse legislation and protection of adults and seniors. Their Adult Protection Act, 2011, requires that, "A person who reasonably believes that an adult may be an adult in need of protective intervention shall immediately give that information, together with the name and address of the adult, if known, to the provincial director, a director, a social worker or a peace officer."

I consulted with many seniors and agencies in my riding of Scarborough-Agincourt, Mr. Speaker, and everyone I've spoken to supports my private members' bill mandating our regulated health professionals to report elder abuse to the public guardian and trustee's office. They include the residents in Villa Elegance, Tam O'Shanter seniors facility—I know some of the residents are here—and Vintage Garden. May Wong, the president of the board of Villa Elegance stated that she is glad to see my initiative on elder abuse as she is a strong advocate for the protection of frail and vulnerable seniors.

In 2002, Carefirst completed a report on elder abuse recommending that, "Health professionals should have the obligation to report any suspected elder abuse, in order to have proper intervention for victims of abuse." A recent poll commissioned by the Canadian Association of Retired Persons found that 95% of their members agree that the duty to report is necessary for professionals who interact with the elderly and dependent adults. This same poll also found that 50% of CARP members believe that

duty to report should be enshrined in law and 35% of them believe it should be mandated by professional bodies.

Mr. Speaker, other organizations like the RNAO, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, also advocated for a no-blame policy for people who report abuse or neglect. I also consulted with the Ontario Information and Privacy Commissioner, Brian Beamish. He affirmed that there's a positive obligation to report by regulated health professionals, as proposed in Bill 148. This bill does not conflict with the current privacy legislation.

My colleague Betty Wu-Lawrence, who was here today, the president of the Canadian nurses association of Ontario stated that the proposed Bill 148 will enable health professionals to be the voice for the voiceless, especially those seniors who experience abuse but are unable to report because of a language barrier. Other colleagues, like Dr. Larissa Tam, an obstetrician and gynecologist at Scarborough Hospital, support Bill 148. She stated that "It enables regulated health professionals to report with reasonable suspicion that elder abuse or neglect could be happening in our community and is key to improving our society and upholding our values." Diane Duncan, the executive director of St. Paul's L'Amoreaux Centre stated that mandatory reporting by regulated health professionals is a necessary step to improving outcomes for those who are victims of abuse or at risk.

Mr. Speaker, before I conclude my remarks, I want to recognize a number of individuals and groups. First, I want to pay tribute to all the seniors who have spoken to me about this issue, some of whom are here today. I want to thank you for your contribution. This bill is about you and it's for you.

The proposed Bill 148 is about protecting the most vulnerable seniors in our community. Elder abuse is a complex, multi-faceted societal issue that deserves our attention in this Legislature.

The elder abuse issue does not only affect my riding of Scarborough-Agincourt, it actually affects every riding in this province. I believe, as elected members of this Legislature, we have a moral responsibility to protect the most vulnerable populations like children, women, the disabled and seniors in our communities.

Diane Duncan of St. Paul L'Amoreaux Centre also said that "if we put as much effort into the prevention of elder abuse as we do child protection, we will give older adults hope that the abuse will end for them one day."

I believe the proposed Bill 148 will make a difference in the protection of the seniors living in our community. I look forward to the debate this afternoon. Thank you for this opportunity.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'll be sharing my time with the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

I am pleased to rise today to join in the debate on Bill 148, Protection of Vulnerable Seniors in the Community

Act, introduced by the member from Scarborough—Agincourt.

I have the privilege of representing seniors' affairs on behalf of our caucus. I spend a lot of time meeting with seniors and associations that represent seniors' issues, both in Perth—Wellington and here at Queen's Park. I believe that Bill 148 is a step in the right direction when it comes to protecting seniors in Ontario. It also helps to raise awareness of elder abuse and to spur discussion about preventative measures against any type of abuse.

At its core, the bill will require regulated health professionals to report any reasonable suspicion that a senior is being abused or neglected. That means that professionals including, but not limited to, doctors, nurses, dentists, physiotherapists and chiropractors will have a duty to report any suspicions of abuse or neglect against a senior citizen.

Currently, seniors residing in long-term-care homes and retirement homes already have this type of protection through existing legislation. I support this bill's intent to expand that protection to seniors living in their own homes or in a living environment outside of a regulated facility.

Before getting too far into the specifics of the bill, I must state that I know most health care professionals already do report any suspected abuse, and that they take this responsibility seriously. I thank all health care professionals for their vigilance in keeping us safe and healthy.

Under the requirements of this bill, if a certain health care provider did suspect a senior was suffering abuse or neglect, he or she would report this to a law enforcement officer, the Public Guardian and Trustee, or another prescribed person. It would then be the responsibility of the Office of the public guardian and trustee to investigate all reports of suspected abuse to determine whether or not an application for a temporary guardian is required.

No proceeding could be commenced against a regulated health care professional for making a report in good faith. Moreover, it will become a professional misconduct for a regulated health professional to fail to report a reasonable suspicion of abuse.

We know that our province's demographics are changing. There are currently two million senior citizens living in Ontario. By 2036, that number is expected to double. It's important that we have the policies in place to ensure that seniors have access to the health care, residential supports and transportation that they need.

We on this side of the House have stood up for seniors when the government has cut important programs. For example, two years ago the Liberals cut physiotherapy services for seniors by \$50 million. As a result of those cuts, physiotherapy services for many seniors were eliminated. In many cases, individuals who still qualify for physiotherapy services must travel to off-site community clinics; that's not an easy task for seniors who no longer drive, especially in our small and rural communities. We called on the government to reverse this decision and

brought the concerns of our constituents to the Legislature.

When it comes to the needs of our province's seniors, we in the PC caucus stand up for what's right. That's why I'm supporting this bill: because any type of abuse or neglect is unacceptable.

1400

I understand that, based on the reported data, many incidents of abuse against seniors are committed by the individual's adult children or spouse. There's no doubt that many would find it difficult and emotional to report abuse by a loved one. That's why I believe it's important that those responsible for overseeing our health and well-being have a duty to report suspected abuse.

Under no circumstances are abuse and neglect acceptable. If registered health care professionals can protect someone from any further victimization, they should absolutely do so, without fear of professional repercussions.

I am pleased to support this bill to ensure that seniors feel free and feel safe in their communities. If anyone listening to today's debate is experiencing any form of abuse or is concerned that someone they know is being victimized, please report it. Contact your local police; they are there to help.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to speak today on Bill 148, the Protection of Vulnerable Seniors in the Community Act. I'd like to thank my colleague from Perth—Wellington, our seniors critic, for all of his work on this file.

Ontario has three pieces of legislation that include reporting obligations for senior abuse. They are the Long-Term Care Homes Act and the Retirement Homes Act, both of which have mandatory reporting in place, and the Substitute Decisions Act.

The bill we're debating today, Bill 148, amends the Substitute Decisions Act and the Regulated Health Professions Act and, if passed, would compel regulated health professionals to report any sign of elder abuse or neglect. It also sets penalties for failure to report.

It's estimated that 10% of the seniors population, and as high as 30%, have been subjected to some form of abuse. Neglect can come in many forms, from withholding care, denying access to necessary services such as home care, improper use of medication, over/under-medicating, to not providing food, proper clothing or hygiene, and even abandonment.

Mr. Speaker, I'm saddened to tell you a story. Although it didn't happen to a constituent in my riding, there is a family from my riding involved. This 89-year-old, Flora, was brought back from the United States. She was dropped off in Canada—actually, here in Toronto—and abandoned by her family. It's a horrendous situation. I can't even comprehend.

It was very complicated because she had been out of the country for some time. There were issues with immigration, so it had to become a federal issue as well

as provincial. Because she didn't have that citizenship, health benefits were in jeopardy.

I do have to commend Health Minister Hoskins's office for their promptness in ensuring that Flora got medical attention and the care she needed in a very quick time frame, as they went through to resolve this whole dispute and get it all worked out. I do want to applaud the minister for doing that.

According to Stats Canada, what happened to Flora happens to about half of senior victims, where the one who abused or neglected them was their own grown child. It's hard to fathom, but that's what the stats are saying. Spouses are the second most likely perpetrators of family violence against seniors—again, almost incomprehensible, but that's what the stats are telling us.

Seniors are reluctant to report abuse, for fear of retaliation or because of their dependence on the abuser for food and shelter. It's a sad situation where someone won't step up and voice their concern because they're actually fearful of more of the same thing they would be reporting. They're also reluctant to report on their own son or daughter, the children they raised, because there is a sense of shame and stigma.

In other cases, they don't report because they are unfamiliar with their rights in the justice system and with the agencies and support services in their community. Sometimes it stems from the fact that some seniors are socially isolated and are not aware of programs such as Elder Abuse Ontario, the Victim Support Line, and/or the Seniors Safety Line.

Bill 148—and I give my colleague Ms. Wong credit—is a good first step. However, mandatory reporting is still no guarantee that the abuse will be confirmed or stopped. That is why it is so important for the government to invest in the needed agencies and support services in communities so that we can identify and respond to elder abuse appropriately.

When it comes to our senior citizens' health and well-being, I believe this government can do better. My colleague from Perth-Wellington talked about the physiotherapy cuts. As the critic for long-term care, that's certainly something that I'm hearing a lot about in the province: the concern of seniors not getting that care. It may not be abuse or neglect, but it certainly is the case that we can do a lot better in that area.

There are 25,000 seniors on a wait-list for access to a nursing home bed in Ontario today. The associate minister knows I'm watching this file like a hawk. I'm holding her to account for the bed promises and challenging her to release the schedule of all bed developments in Ontario, and I will continue to do that, because that's my job. I need to make sure that we have the services and programs, and I hope the associate minister will actually regard me, in doing that, which is actually a support for her, because we do need to do more for those seniors we've made commitments to.

Sadly, though, to date, that schedule—much like the promised new nursing beds—remains non-existent. So I will continue—and the minister is here in the House

today—to help her in her cause, to get more of that budget for long-term care.

The last report I read by the United Senior Citizens of Ontario talked about the urgency of building more nursing beds and facilities. The same has been recommended by the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors, the Ontario Long Term Care Association, the Ontario Long Term Care Physicians, the Ontario Association of Residents' Councils and Family Councils Ontario. The pressure is on to deliver the promised beds, especially in light of the projection that Ontario's long-term care wait-list will double to 50,000 seniors in just seven years.

The government can't afford not to do anything on long-term care. Consider again the population statistics in my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. The boomer generation comprises a significant portion of Bruce and Grey counties. Our population of those 80 years and older has jumped by nearly 20% over the last six years. The senior population is expected to reach 46.5% in the next two decades, and right in my backyard, we have a higher than the provincial average number of seniors. This is a very, very particularly concerning issue for me and one part of my critic role that I take very seriously, obviously.

Fortunately, in my communities, people do rally behind senior citizens. We have a number of clubs and groups. The list is too long for me to get through them all, but I believe there are 32 that I've been able to take note of. I'm just going to throw out a couple: the Derby Pioneers Club, the Lion's Head Friendship Club, the Hanover Senior Citizens Friendship Club, the Lads and Lassies of Lindsay, the Maxwell Young at Hearts, the Sauble Sandpipers Club, the McQuay Tannery seniors' resource centre in Owen Sound and the Silver Cs, just to name a few, as I say. It's great to see those clubs providing opportunities for those seniors to get together and help. That social network, if nothing else, allows them to stay active in their community.

We have a number of programs and services that provide everything from helping seniors with their groceries and meal preparation to gardening or snow removal. But as always, we can do better. I think we should be empowering seniors through information.

I hope the government will do that with Bill 148. There has to be a public education component to raise the awareness of elder abuse and the protection of seniors. Seniors' advocates have been calling for years for mandatory reporting of suspected elder abuse to authorities. Under Bill 148, that authority would be the police, who would then report immediately to the public guardian and trustee.

I think it's also important that the member from Scarborough-Agincourt included whistle-blowing protection to protect those who will report abuse in Bill 148. I commend her for that. It says that a proceeding may not be commenced against a regulated health professional for having made a report in good faith. It's the right thing to do; it's the right thing for all people to do. If you see

neglect, as my colleague from Perth–Wellington said, everyone should step up and make sure that they report it. Step out and offer a hand to someone you believe may be in need of care. It doesn't have to be adversarial, it doesn't have to be accusatory, but you should always—it's like mental health. If you suspect it, it's better to go out and ask the question and try to offer your hand to help.

Mr. Speaker, I support the proposed changes and hope to see a speedy passage of Bill 148. I commend my colleague Ms. Wong again.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Just a reminder to the member: We refer to members by riding.

Mr. Bill Walker: My apologies, Mr. Speaker: Scarborough—Agincourt.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you.

Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm always proud to rise in this Legislature on behalf of my constituents in London–Fanshawe. Today, I rise to speak to Bill 148, the Protection of Vulnerable Seniors in the Community Act.

As the NDP critic for seniors, I am proud to contribute to the debate on this very important issue. As the critic, I have had the opportunity to speak with seniors from across the province, including Oshawa, Toronto and back in my riding of London–Fanshawe.

Seniors have many issues that they must face on a daily basis, but one of the largest issues is abuse or neglect, whether it's in the community or long-term-care facilities. I am happy that this bill was introduced by the member from Scarborough–Agincourt and I applaud her for her work on the file.

As we know, this bill amends the Substitute Decisions Act and the Regulated Health Professions Act to mandate that regulated health professionals who have reasonable grounds to suspect a senior living in the community is being abused or neglected must report that suspicion to the police or the public guardian and trustee. Furthermore, health professionals who report such a suspicion in good faith are protected from intimidation, dismissal or reprisal.

1410

Senior abuse is a major problem here in Ontario and across the country. According to the Canadian Nurses Association, nearly 8,000 incidents of elder abuse were reported across Canada in 2009. That is 8,000 too many.

I am happy that this bill extends mandatory reporting for abuse and neglect for seniors living in the community. It is important to note that systemic abuse is included in this legislation, whereas it is absent from the definition of abuse in both the Long-Term Care Homes Act and the Retirement Homes Act.

This is a good piece of legislation, and I intend to vote for it, yet I cannot stand here without pointing out that there continue to be issues surrounding abuse and neglect in long-term-care facilities. Just last week, the Auditor General found that there is a growing backlog of critical-incident and complaints inspections in long-term-care

homes. The backlog doubled in just a year and a half, from 1,300 to 2,800. According to the Auditor General, such delays can “place residents at risk.”

Furthermore, and shockingly, the Auditor General also found “that delays by the ministry in conducting complaints and critical-incident inspections and ensuring that homes correct deficiencies identified place residents at risk. We found that the ministry often did not take timely action to ensure residents were safe and their rights were protected.”

This government needs to take responsibility for its inaction on abuse and neglect of seniors in long-term care. Residents of my riding have called and emailed my office with stories of their families and loved ones facing mistreatment in long-term care.

I personally met with Carol Cuthbert about her 92-year-old mother, who was residing in Mount Hope at St. Joe's. She was attacked by a fellow resident and brutally beaten. In the past, her clothes had gone missing, and she is gravely concerned about security and care. She says she reported the abuse and there was no action.

Gloria Thompson is another resident in my riding, whom I met, whose mother was abused in long-term care but, due to the lack of availability in other facilities, her mother had nowhere to go.

This is a systemic problem, Speaker. In the news, we often hear about abuse and neglect in long-term care. Sadly, it's often women who are victims of this abuse. In fact, the federal committee on the status of women found that women are generally more likely to be victimized than men. This includes impacts of financial abuse, because women already tend to have fewer financial resources and a greater proportion of senior women live in poverty.

Our seniors deserve better. This bill is a step in the right direction, but we need better protection for our elderly. We need to ensure that those who are most vulnerable in society are being looked after.

I want to finish today by saying that this government really needs to take action. Last week, I asked the government to implement the coroner's recommendations to improve care for all Ontarians in long-term-care residences. We know that the government has failed to provide the behavioural supports that seniors with dementia need. It's as a result of the findings in the Auditor General's report that I make that statement.

When the rights of patients are violated, too many families are left in the dark, as we've seen, time and time again. Each and every senior deserves to live in safety and dignity. While I commend the member for introducing this bill and doing the right thing on abuse in the community, I hope that this Liberal government will step up and take real action when it comes to elder abuse in our society.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's my pleasure to rise today, on behalf of my constituents in Windsor West, to speak to this important legislation, Bill 148. I'd like to thank my

colleague opposite, the member for Scarborough—Agin-court, for bringing this issue forward. I would also like to thank the Ontario NDP critic for seniors, the member for London—Fanshawe, for all the work she does on this file and for her strong advocacy for seniors' issues in Ontario.

Bill 148, the Protection of Vulnerable Seniors in the Community Act, 2015, is an important and timely piece of legislation, and I am proud to offer my support for this bill.

First and foremost, this bill will raise the awareness of elder abuse and the protection of seniors, which is particularly important as our senior demographic continues to grow. According to 2011 census data, 15.7% of the population of the city of Windsor was over the age of 65, an increase of 7% from 2009. There are currently two million seniors aged 65 and over, or 14.6% of the population, who reside in Ontario. From 2009 to 2011, people over the age of 65 living in Windsor increased by 9%, to a total of 15.7% of our population in 2011. This amounts to approximately 30,000 residents.

Seniors are a growing and incredibly important demographic that contributes so much to my community. That said, the level of senior abuse in this province is nothing short of alarming. Of the estimated two million seniors living in Ontario, between 40,000 and 200,000 seniors have experienced or are experiencing elder abuse. Clearly, more needs to be done to help one of our growing and most vulnerable populations.

If passed, this legislation would amend the Substitute Decisions Act and the Regulated Health Professions Act to mandate that regulated health professionals who have reasonable grounds to suspect that a senior living in the community is being abused or neglected must report that suspicion to the police or the public guardian and trustee. Health professionals who report such a suspicion in good faith are protected from intimidation, dismissal or reprisal. That's a very important part of the bill. We need to make sure that those people who we expect to advocate for the seniors who are being abused are protected from reprisal for coming forward.

It would be an act of professional misconduct for a regulated health professional to fail to report a reasonable suspicion that a senior is being abused or neglected.

We need to act now to prevent senior abuse. It's clear that this government has failed to make this a priority over the years. Just last week, the Auditor General found alarming delays for home care assessments. The Auditor General indicated that there are no provincial minimum service levels required for personal support services, and that supports for caregivers are limited and inconsistent across Ontario. I would like to read a quote from the Auditor General's report that highlights these issues:

"Our audit" of long-term care "found that delays by the ministry in conducting complaints and critical-incidence inspections and ensuring that homes correct deficiencies identified place residents at risk. We found that the ministry often did not take timely action to ensure residents were safe and their rights were protected."

Health Quality Ontario reports in their annual report 2015 that distress is growing amongst informal caregivers who do not have enough supports.

Too many people in southwestern Ontario are experiencing issues with seniors care. Last year, our local CCAC was reassessing home care recipients at an alarming rate. Seniors in my riding were asked to administer their partners' intravenous medication and were put in other uncomfortable situations.

My bill dealing with these issues has yet to be called to committee, and I can only hope that this bill does not suffer the same delays.

In southwestern Ontario, the Leamington Court retirement home will be closing 24 beds. Residents like Evelyn Nevin and her husband will be displaced and moved to an alternate location. The reason they went to Leamington Court in the first place was due to the shocking wait time at long-term-care homes in the city of Windsor. We need action to reduce wait times for long-term-care homes, but the Auditor General's report makes it clear that this government is failing Ontarians.

It's really important that legislation that protects the most vulnerable and those who are put out to advocate on their behalf—that they are protected, that they are taken care of. We all have aging parents who dedicated their lives to taking care of us. Now, as they age, it's our job to take care of them and make sure that they are receiving the best care possible and that when an issue does arise, the health care professionals that would be able to assess the situation and report it are protected. We often find, in the education system, that the education workers are expected to report suspected abuse of the children in their care, but that if they do come forward and bring that issue forward and it is found that it's not exactly accurate, there are often reprisals for teachers for showing that they care and that they are concerned. So we need to make sure that the people who are charged with the care of our seniors have the means to come forward without reprisal and report suspected abuse. We need to make sure our seniors are being very well taken care of.

1420

I notice that my time is running short, so I'd like to thank you for allowing me time to speak to the bill today. I fully support the bill. I hope that it doesn't get tied up in committee, and I hope that we can see some changes when it comes to taking care of our senior population.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. John Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I'll be sharing my time with the members from Davenport and Etobicoke North.

I'm very pleased today to rise to speak in support of Bill 148. I'm very pleased to hear all the support there is across the House. I want to say congratulations to my seatmate, the member for Scarborough—Agin-court, for putting forward this legislation. As many of you may know, she was a public health nurse—a very honourable profession. My mom was a public health nurse early on in my life.

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: I'm getting heckled already.

She was a VON. A public health nurse is a really difficult, challenging job. The member from Scarborough–Agincourt really and truly cares about those people who are most vulnerable.

As you know, Bill 148 would require health professionals caring for seniors who suspect abuse or neglect to report to the appropriate authorities: the public guardian and trustee, a police officer or a prescribed person.

Protecting our most vulnerable population at work and at home is a priority for all of us here in government. For instance, we have similar safeguards around child protection: making sure that young Ontarians are growing up in safe and happy homes. It's important that we extend these protections to other vulnerable populations, like seniors.

If you take a look at what being a senior is like, in many cases, as you get older, you tend to get a little bit weaker. Your income gets a little bit more crunched. Your friends: Not all of them are always around. Your family is a little bit farther away from you. You become a little bit more isolated. Whether you are a senior or not, whether you are old or not, being in that kind of circumstance makes you very vulnerable. As many of the members said, it's often vulnerable people who are close to you.

Health care professionals are ideally situated to be able to spot suspected abuse of people. I think it's prudent that we extend the measures that are in this legislation. I also notice as well that she has extended protection for good-faith reporting. That's very important. One of the things in reporting things that you suspect is, you're worried and you say, "Do I know what I'm seeing?"

I know of a circumstance like that—not with a senior but with a very vulnerable, developmentally exceptional woman in our community who has just recently passed away. She was living in a rooming house, and a number of us suspected that something just wasn't quite right, so we reported that. As a consequence, she was moved out to a residence that was more appropriate. She was being taken advantage of financially and physically, and it was a very sad situation. She was actually a volunteer in our office. I spoke about her a couple of weeks ago. But it took some time to actually make that report. It's important that we extend those protections to people who make the decision to say, "I think something is wrong, and I want to let somebody know."

I want to congratulate the member on her bill, and I look forward to it passing today. Thanks for all the support that I've heard throughout the Legislature today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I rise today to address Bill 148, the Protection of Vulnerable Seniors in the Community Act.

In my riding of Davenport, seniors come into my constituency office every day with questions about what

our government has been doing to make Ontario a better place to live for seniors. Davenport is home to over nine seniors' residences. Seniors represent a large portion of the population in my riding, and it keeps growing every year. There are, as of this year, two million seniors aged 65 and over, or 14.6% of the population, who reside in Ontario.

I am so lucky to have numerous, engaged seniors and organizations like the Davenport-Perth community health centre, Abrigo and the West Neighbourhood House that provide free, multicultural programs in various languages that promote better health, wellness, and social and recreational activities for seniors. These programs, with support from our government, provide exercise, guest speakers, movies, arts and crafts, informal English as a second language, dancing, computer lessons, and much, much more.

However, there is an aspect of caring for our seniors that is more important than any language, exercise or computer class: Caring also includes personal safety and protection from abuse. As you know, Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to protecting seniors in the province and it is our duty as a government to ensure the personal safety of those who are the most vulnerable to elder abuse. Sadly, recent studies show that 2% to 10% of seniors are abused. This means that there are between 40,000 and 200,000 seniors in Ontario who have experienced or are currently experiencing abuse.

Elder abuse also appears in family life, with about four out of 10, or 43%, of senior victims of police-reported family violence indicating that the accused was their own grown child. Spouses are the second most likely family members to be identified in family violence against seniors.

It is our duty as the Ontario government to protect those who are most at harm. Above all else, elder care should be about protecting those who are most vulnerable. If passed, Bill 148, the Protection of Vulnerable Seniors in the Community Act, will amend the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992, and the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991.

The Substitute Decisions Act, 1992, will be amended to require regulated health professionals to report any reasonable suspicion that a senior is being abused or neglected. The public guardian and trustee is required to investigate the report to determine whether an application for a temporary guardianship is required. This requirement to report suspected abuse or neglect shall apply even if the information that is required to be disclosed is confidential or privileged, unless the information is subject to solicitor-client privilege.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, Ontario is proud to have already put in place regulations that protect residents of retirement homes. This bill will not apply to the senior if the senior is a resident of a retirement home as defined in the Retirement Homes Act, 2010, or if they are residents of a long-term-care home as defined in the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007.

One aspect that hinders the reporting of elder abuse is the intimidation, dismissal or penalization of regulated health professionals who make reporting abuse prohibitive. To stop this common problem, the changes will ensure that no proceeding may be commenced against a regulated health professional for making a report in good faith. In some cases, a senior's relationship with regulated health professionals may be the most active relationship in their lives. Thus, regulated health professionals, who may be the lone point of contact for seniors, will now have the ability to report suspected neglect or abuse.

As I stated earlier, strengthening protections for seniors while changing the attitudes and thinking around the reporting of elder abuse is a part of this government's duty to protect all Ontarians. Moreover, this bill will raise awareness of elder abuse and the protections for seniors, especially as the seniors demographic continues to grow.

Once passed, I will be pleased to bring Bill 148, the Protection of Vulnerable Seniors in the Community Act, to Davenport as it will protect a growing group in my community. It is truly our duty to protect.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Etobicoke North.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Thank you to my colleagues opposite for the recognition, not only of this bill brought by my honourable colleague from Scarborough—Agin-court, Soo Wong, a nurse—but as you know, I'm pleased to follow as one of the regulated health professionals who will be inspired, implicated, asked, cajoled and welcomed to follow along with this whole idea on elder abuse.

1430

I think there are a number of positive benefits, ramifications and effects of this particular bill. I would, Speaker, with your permission, like to actually inform my colleagues who are regulated health professionals and, by extension, the many, many touch points that we may have, if you might, almost acting as sentinels, almost acting as our, shall we say, "spies," or at least our surveillance opportunities for this very, very common problem.

They include audiologists, language pathologists, chiropodists, chiropractors, dental hygienists, dental technologists, dentists, denturists, dietitians, kinesiologists, massage therapists, medical laboratory technologists, medical radiation technologists, of course physicians, midwives, nurses, occupational therapists, opticians, optometrists, pharmacists, physiotherapists, psychologists, respiratory therapists, speech-language pathologists and even traditional Chinese medicine practitioners. That is quite a cohort of eyes and feeling minds that, hopefully, if we work in unison, can bring forward and really act on the best parts of Bill 148, the Protection of Vulnerable Seniors in the Community Act.

I have to say as well that as a practising physician, I see many, many different forms of neglect, senior abuse, elder abuse, whatever terms you want to use. It can manifest in many different ways, whether it's physical,

emotional, psychological, medical, financial—even, if I might say, absence of attention, or attentional. As an example, there are many seniors who have able-bodied members of their own family who will neither visit enough nor care enough nor renew prescriptions enough nor basically attend to their simple human need for attention—forget about this idea of black eyes or hip fractures etc.

All in all, I think this is an important bill brought by my honourable nursing colleague Soo Wong, MPP for Scarborough—Agin-court, because it will help to publicize, dramatize and inspire the many, many regulated health professionals to have an index of suspicion and awareness for this important and unfortunate ever-present idea of elder abuse.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for Scarborough—Agin-court. You have two minutes for your response.

Ms. Soo Wong: I want to thank the members from Perth—Wellington, Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, London—Fanshawe, Windsor West, Ottawa South, Davenport and Etobicoke North for your remarks and comments related to my bill, Bill 148. I heard overwhelmingly their support for my proposed legislation.

For my last two minutes, I want to clarify the comments made from the opposition party about the changes and amendments to physiotherapists. The information is not accurate, folks; it's not accurate. We actually expanded the funding for physiotherapy. Moreover, it's not just a GTA expansion; it's across the province. Make sure you have the facts when you speak about this bill.

The other piece here is this legislation is about protecting seniors living in their community, not in long-term care and not in retirement homes, because we already have legislation right now to protect those seniors living in retirement homes and nursing homes.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to pay tribute to those who came before us: my good friend and good colleague the former member from Etobicoke Centre, Donna Cansfield; as well as the former minister Rick Bartolucci, who in 2003 brought in a private member's bill, Bill 30, dealing with the protection of adults/seniors. If that bill would have passed in 2003, we wouldn't be having this conversation right now.

In my last 30 seconds, I want to thank everybody who I've spoken to, but more importantly, the staff here at Queen's Park: Eric Chamney, legislative counsel—I think there were 12 drafts of my bill; thank you so much, Eric, and in between, there was a baby born—as well as my staff from both the constituency office and here in Queen's Park.

I want to encourage all the members to support Bill 148. At the end of the day, we have a moral duty in this House to protect everybody, especially those who are the most vulnerable. I want to make sure that it goes to committee for more public hearings.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you all very much. We'll take the vote on this item at the end of private members' business.

ROWAN'S LAW ADVISORY
COMMITTEE ACT, 2015
LOI DE 2015 SUR LE COMITÉ
CONSULTATIF DE LA LOI ROWAN

Ms. MacLeod moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 149, An Act to establish an advisory committee to make recommendations on the jury recommendations made in the inquest into the death of Rowan Stringer /
Projet de loi 149, Loi créant un comité consultatif chargé d'examiner les recommandations formulées par le jury à la suite de l'enquête sur le décès de Rowan Stringer.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I will be sharing my time with the member from Ottawa South.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead, the late anthropologist, once famously said that, and I must admit that it has become a go-to quote of mine over the past decade when speaking with volunteers. It's simple yet profound, lofty but true.

I couldn't help but think of how reflective those words are of the small group of thoughtful and committed citizens from Nepean-Carleton who brought Rowan's Law to the floor of this assembly and who have been changing the world view, not just our own local view in Ottawa, on how we identify, treat and educate athletes, coaches, parents, medical professionals and others on the reality of concussions, brain injuries and trauma that could have long-term effects and be potentially fatal.

Gordon and Kathleen Stringer, who are here today, have been the backbone of our group. Their courage, grace and eloquence throughout the tragedy of losing their beautiful daughter, Rowan, to second-impact syndrome caused by multiple concussions have not only been remarkable but will undoubtedly result in real change.

I've come to know Rowan Stringer not from going out for coffee with her or watching her play rugby, but through her mother and father. I've recounted Rowan's story to multiple people, but the most personal to me was my 10-year-old daughter, Victoria—an athlete who plays soccer, hockey and Bordenball. She is also a gymnast. Victoria happened to be in the car when I took a media call on Rowan's Law over my hands-free this past summer.

Other members in this assembly will know that sometimes our job can be all-consuming. They will also understand when I say I didn't realize she was paying attention to my conversation about the death of another child, that is, until the call ended. She heard how Rowan had died. I was alarmed when a very soft voice from the back of the minivan said, "Mama, can you tell me who Rowan is? Will I die from a concussion?"

At first—members will be shocked—I was speechless. I didn't want to answer. I didn't know what to say. Most

of all, I didn't want to scare her, but I gave her an honest answer. I told her everything I knew about Rowan Stringer. I told her everything I knew—which was limited at the time—about concussion treatment and awareness, including imparting to her that if she gets hurt in hockey or soccer, she has a responsibility to tell mommy and her coaches if she bangs her head. I'm proud to say that she cared so much about Rowan Stringer and so many other people that I brought her out of school today to be part of this process.

The story of Rowan Stringer is one that every single parent in Ontario needs to be aware of. Rowan was a 17-year-old rugby player. She played for John McCrae Secondary School and the Barrhaven Scottish Rugby Football Club, which, I'm very proud, have joined us here today as well. She was also a ringette player, just like I was.

Rowan was nurturing, according to her mom and her dad, and she wanted to become a nurse. She was a young lady with many interests, and she also had many friends.

Rowan Stringer left us far too young. In a cruel twist of fate, she died playing the sport she loved. She saved other lives, though, not from her nursing career, but from being an organ donor. Hopefully with the passage of this law, she'll save even more. Rowan Stringer has also become the public face of concussions, so it is only right that the legislation bear her name.

A lengthy and emotional coroner's inquest was called into Rowan's death, a death caused by multiple concussions and an injury causing mass swelling in her brain. Rowan likely knew that she had a concussion, as we would later find out, but just as likely, Rowan did not understand that it could be potentially fatal. Nor would she have understood what the term "second-impact syndrome" would be: a rare condition in which a second or third concussion occurs before the first one is healed.

1440

The coroner's inquest made 49 recommendations, many of which fall under provincial jurisdiction, and suggested it be called Rowan's Law. By passing Rowan's Law, Ontario would be a leader in Canada, becoming the first jurisdiction in our country with concussion legislation. I am pleased to have the support of the Premier of Ontario and the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport to ensure that this will become law.

The coroner's recommendations include making concussion awareness mandatory in Ontario's curriculum, the promotion of an annual brain awareness day, and better tools for coaches, players and others to identify and treat concussions. Presently, there is no mechanism, nor process in the Legislature, that we can use to implement a coroner's inquest for these recommendations. That is what Rowan's Law aims to accomplish. We need Rowan's Law to put these life-changing matters into motion. By passing Rowan's Law, the Ontario Legislature will empower the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport to act on those recommendations.

I'd like to briefly acknowledge some people who are here from Parachute Canada, the Ontario Athletic Ther-

apists Association, Coaches of Canada and Rugby Canada. There is no doubt in my mind that, because of their passion, this bill will be passed into law, and we cannot wait too long to do that. As the groups joining us will tell you, this is a golden opportunity, one that we simply cannot miss.

I would be remiss not to point out that the first day that we talked about concussion legislation—I was the education critic at the time—Walter Gretzky was sitting in the Speaker's chair and it was the day that Sidney Crosby would actually be cleared to play again in the NHL.

Just a couple of weeks ago, Wayne Gretzky opined that when he played hockey, we didn't really think about concussions. Today, even little girls like young Keeley Baizana from Barrhaven, who plays in the same Nepean Wildcats hockey league as my daughter, deal with concussions. She's been in and out of school for the past three months.

We have a lot of work to do and I know the members in this assembly are up to doing it. There was an old adage where I grew up in Nova Scotia that said, "Many hands make light work." Rowan's Law has proven that old adage true.

It's now time for me to say thank you to those who have made this happen. In our community, a grassroots team met weekly around the big farmhouse table at Parlour Pizza. Joe and Linda Price welcomed their fellow Barrhaven Scottish Rugby players Barb Gillie, Gary Thomas and Phil Selig; Rugby Canada's Paul Hunter; as well as community leaders Darrell Bartraw and Bob Wilson; concussion therapist Ashley Powers; Ottawa councillors Jan Harder and Jody Mitic; and my team. They were the driving force behind a province-wide campaign to petition all members of this assembly, who have circulated, supported and shared it in the public record.

To my colleagues in this House today who will speak, I thank you in advance. My gratitude, however, is most extended to the members for Kitchener–Waterloo and Ottawa South for co-sponsoring Rowan's Law and for helping these Nepean–Carleton residents take this to the floor of the assembly. We must be doing something right, my dear friends, because the federal government wants to emulate us.

I would also like to say thank you to my staff. Julia Mackenzie, thank you for adopting this project as if it was your own baby. You have nurtured Rowan's Law with compassion, diligence and hard work. Jordan Milks, you were diligently involved in every draft of this bill and you made it exactly what the Stringer family wanted, and what my community and my colleagues wanted. Frank Hall, your vision, passion and drive for Rowan's Law in Nepean–Carleton brought this bill to new heights.

As I close—and I remind you of that quote from Margaret Mead—I also want to point out one other young lady: Her name is Shannon Hall. She is 14 years old from the city of Ottawa and she took the petition and got hundreds of signatures from her classmates. Shannon,

I'd like to acknowledge you right now, because I think in order for us to carry this forward and make this bill become law, we need a lot more Shannon Halls in this assembly.

With that, I cede the floor to my colleague from Ottawa South. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart for making this a reality.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: I want to thank the member from Nepean–Carleton for sharing her time with me. I want to thank all of my colleagues here in the Legislature and the Premier for the tremendous support that has been shown for this bill. I want to thank the member from Kitchener–Waterloo for co-sponsoring it. I want to thank the member from Nepean–Carleton for bringing this initiative forward and giving expression to something that was very important to a family in her community, but indeed to all our families.

I don't have a lot of time, but I do want to say this: Rowan's death was preventable. Injuries are preventable. That's what this bill is about. Now, we didn't hear the whole story of Rowan today, but I want to thank the Stringers, because I want to tell you a story of something that has left an indelible impression on my mind, and that's why this bill is important.

At a time after Rowan had passed and they had graciously donated her organs to the Trillium Gift of Life, they got a call. They got a call because the media found out about Rowan's death, a very tragic death. I have three kids. Actually, my oldest daughter played rugby. Many of us in here have children. You can imagine that when the thing we all worry about and fear the most happens to you—something happens to the people who are most precious to you, and then you get a call—you're kind of ripped wide open, and your intention is to say, "I need to protect myself. I need to protect my family. I need to grieve. I need to be alone. I don't necessarily want to be out there with everybody."

As you know, when the media calls, you have a decision to make, because they are going to do something. They made a very courageous decision in a very short period of time. It takes a lot of courage to say, "I think we need to do this. It's important. I'm leaving myself exposed and vulnerable. I still have these 'what-if' questions in my head."

I wanted to make sure that people understood those circumstances and the efforts that the Stringers have made. I strongly believe that we owe it to them and their efforts: their efforts to get a coroner's inquiry and their efforts to raise awareness. We owe it to them, and we owe it to all our families to ensure that we pass Rowan's Law today, and that we move forward quickly to ensure that we get it done and protect the people who are dearest to us.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure and a privilege, actually, to join this debate today. I want to say at the

outset that this is one of the first times co-sponsorship of any piece of legislation has come forward for quite some time. I think that we have Rowan and the Stringer family to thank. Some people may think it is nothing short of a miracle that the NDP, the Liberals and the Conservatives are working together, but I think this is actually a model going forward, where we can actually represent the people of this province with greater integrity and principles.

I want to say that the issue of concussions first came to my attention when I was president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. I got a call from a mother whose daughter had had a serious concussion. She was really concerned, because the school board at the time was not accommodating this young woman; in fact, they were fairly dismissive of it. That's because concussions are actually a silent epidemic in our society right now. You can't see it and you can't touch it, but you can see the impact that concussions have going forward.

Because of that experience, she said, "Don't they understand that my daughter has a brain injury? She has a brain injury, and she is hurting." Because of that, that started the path around return-to-learning policies in the province of Ontario. I also feel compelled to mention that as well.

The other issue is that as a parent, as the member from Ottawa South mentioned, I personally went through this experience with my son having two serious concussions. I will never forget the moment when the doctor said to me, "He has a brain injury." I thought there was a ranking for concussions, because there are a lot of stereotypes and a lot of myths around concussions. I said, "Well, how bad is it?" He said, "There's no such thing as not a damaging brain injury. They're all bad. So now you need to go forward." Having that knowledge, actually, was an empowering moment, and that's very symbolic of the work that we're going to accomplish today in this House.

1450

I wish that the Stringer family had had that opportunity, but Rowan's Law, I hope, will ensure that every parent has that knowledge transfer from the medical community so that they can move forward with that knowledge and that power.

As has already been mentioned, Rowan Stringer's story is heartbreaking, and it was incredibly powerful today to hear Charles Tator say that this was preventable. It was just an incredibly emotional moment that will stay with me and, I think, will stay with everyone who has gone on this journey with the Stringer family. It will stay with them.

The power of this legislation, actually, I don't think we fully acknowledge yet. Since I first started speaking with the MPPs from Ottawa South and Nepean-Carleton about Rowan's Law, I've been in touch with many people in different fields—constituents and others—all of whom have expressed the significance of putting in place protocols around concussions, and they are very support-

ive of a legislative option. Many of those people are particularly focusing on protecting the health of young people.

I'd like to mention some of those people and organizations that I've been in touch with. First of all, the support has been incredible. It has been coming from across the entire province. I have here with me today Peter Baxter, who is the director of athletics at Wilfrid Laurier University. He's also the president of the Ontario University Athletics association. This is a very topical issue with them as well.

I'm pleased to welcome Fitz "The Whip" Vanderpool, the winner of six Canadian international boxing championships. He has done incredible work on making sure that athletic safety is first and foremost. I want to thank you for that work. He's joined by Diane Matyas today as well.

Roly Webster is the director of athletics for the University of Waterloo. Marie Pringle is from the Kitchener-Waterloo Skating Club. Dr. Neilank Jha, who runs the Konkussion research organization, is a well-known neurosurgeon. Carol DeMatteo, from McMaster University School of Rehabilitation Science, reached out because of this legislation. Susan Forbes is from the Play Safe Initiative.

Finally, this morning, I had Kerry Goulet here. He is a member of the ice hockey hall of fame and co-founder of Stop Concussions, along with NHL player Keith Primeau. Keith Primeau has gone on the record. I think it's so courageous and powerful when athletes speak out about their experiences with concussions, because they're modelling this behaviour for amateur athletes going forward.

Keith Primeau has said, "No matter what equipment or safety gear kids use, everyone involved should be clothed in respect—respect for the game, respect for the opponents, respects for the rules, respect for body and brain."

Their work on Stop Concussions has focused on education and awareness and making the games safer. I think the key theme here is the prevention piece.

All of these individuals want to be involved in the issue of addressing concussions, starting with awareness and prevention among young people and athletes.

It occurred to me, as I got involved in this initiative around concussion awareness, that there is all of this knowledge out there, and there are all of these well-intentioned and researched options. But the coordination piece will be the challenge, I think. That's why, when this piece of legislation does go to committee, that will be the place where we do greater engagement around youth, greater engagement around an implementation strategy that may require resources from Queen's Park. That may happen, because we have to move past just the language of protecting young athletes.

Finally, I just want to thank the Stringer family for sharing Rowan with us. I'm just so incredibly impressed with your personal commitment to honour the life of your daughter, but also to ensure that the legislation that

comes from this place is meaningful, that it's positive, and that it does what we want it to do.

Let's do that work together. Let's make sure that this goes to committee, that it moves through committee very quickly and that we get the job done.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I want to start off by acknowledging the family, the advocates, supporters, friends and family who are here today. I just want to thank them for their continued advocacy and support for this bill. I also want to thank the three members who came together. Despite being in different parties, they came together to do the right thing that is important for the province of Ontario.

I've had the opportunity to speak to the member from Nepean–Carleton several times on this issue. I want to thank her for her leadership and commitment on this file. She has done an extraordinary job.

I think it's really important that we as elected officials, as members of provincial Parliament, do all we can do to ensure that young people and all people in this province are kept safe. I know that this bill attempts to do that. I'm very proud to be here today to speak on behalf of the bill. I anticipate that it will go through committee, get back to the Legislature and move over to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport so we can get the advisory committee going as soon as possible. I think it's essential to bring forward those recommendations to ensure that young people are protected when they're playing sports. We know that any life lost or injury in sport is something that we should be responsible for, making sure it is preventable.

I was very surprised when I was doing a bit of research on concussions. I couldn't believe that no province had moved forward on this. In the United States, there have been many states—in fact, I think all 50 of the states have put forward some type of legislation to dictate laws and legislation around youth concussions. I know that back in 2012, the Minister of Education did put something forward and there was a discussion then, but I'm so happy we're at the point here today where the members have brought forward something that we can take into the ministry and really work with to strengthen our sports safety here in Ontario.

We know that a lot of things are changing when it comes to science and technology. I was sharing with the member opposite from Nepean–Carleton that there are these experimental blood tests to detect early concussions. Things are happening at a rapid pace in science and technology, and there's a lot more we could be doing if we have a strategy built in, through these recommendations, to find out what's happening around the world, take those best practices, bring them here to Ontario and share them with other provinces.

I was happy to hear that there are other provinces that are taking notice of what's happening here in Ontario and the debates that are taking place. I hope that we find ourselves one day in a place where every single province,

our territories and all school boards have strong policies in place to prevent tragedies like this from happening.

Like the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, my first real exposure to concussions was in the exact same situation. As a school board trustee, I had a parent call me, and she had a gifted student, a really bright young man who was going to one of the international baccalaureate schools in my community. He was way ahead in regard to credits. He suffered a concussion, and everything went downhill for him. He couldn't show up to school and he couldn't pay attention anymore. I remember it was through the advocacy of my office and other members of the board and staff that they developed a plan that worked well for him. But, in all fairness, the teachers and the principal—no one knew how to actually accommodate this young man who had this challenge.

I know, as the minister responsible for sport, we have made some changes in the last couple of years. Our provincial sports organizations—I know that Rugby Ontario is here—have to have a policy in place to work with concussions in order to receive provincial funding. We're going to make sure that as the recommendations come forward from an advisory committee, we will strengthen the way in which we engage our sports organizations, our education system and our health care system so we can make Ontario a much safer place for young people.

1500

Bill 149 represents the first in a number of steps to ensure that Ontarians can play safely. We launched our sports plan a couple of weeks ago here in Ontario, and one of the pieces within it is to participate in sport safety. So it's perfect timing to work with an advisory committee and our sports plan advisory committee on how they can work together to ensure that participation in sport is safe.

I think that right now is the perfect time for this to come forward. I thank the family. I thank all of the friends, the advocates and the organizations that are here today, for working with the members here to show us the direction which you think is best for the young people and all people of Ontario.

I just want to thank—and you'll have my commitment that I will do whatever I can as the minister responsible for sport in Ontario to protect our young people in this province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate.

Mr. Patrick Brown: It's my pleasure to rise in the Legislature here today to speak about this very important piece of legislation. I'd like to start by congratulating my colleague from Nepean–Carleton for her tireless work on this bill. It was her effort, along with the work of her colleagues across the aisle, that made this possible. So I also want to acknowledge and thank the members from Kitchener–Waterloo and Ottawa South. This is certainly an example of how it should be at Queen's Park, when we see three members of provincial Parliament from three different parties working together on an issue that

unites all parties. This has been a wonderful example of bipartisanship, and you couldn't find a better cause to channel that energy behind.

Rowan's Law is named after Rowan Stringer, a high school rugby star from Barrhaven who died tragically from second-impact syndrome after playing through a game with a concussion. She didn't know and understand the consequences of ignoring concussions, and her peers and her coaches didn't have the necessary tools to identify concussion-related symptoms.

Rowan had a big heart and a passion for helping, serving and caring for others. I'm told that Rowan had dreams of going on to university and studying to become a pediatric nurse. I think this bill serves as a fitting tribute for this young girl, a legacy of helping prevent further injury and death from concussion.

When the member from Nepean–Carleton called me to tell me about this idea, I instantly told her that it was a phenomenal idea because I had a volunteer in my office, a young girl, Megan Stock, who suffered from a serious concussion as well and had talked to me about the importance of education on concussions. I was just so happy when the member for Nepean–Carleton told me she was embarking on this initiative with the support of the members from Kitchener–Waterloo and Ottawa South.

As many of you know, I've taken a passionate interest in hockey over the years, growing up playing the sport. In the last few years, concussions have been brought to the forefront of discussion in the NHL and the larger hockey community. There have been a number of high-profile injuries to players and a number of tragic deaths to retired hockey players due in no small part to the seriousness of concussions suffered during their careers. I know that the member from Kitchener–Waterloo just referenced one example about 10 minutes ago.

Both the NHL and the NHL Players' Association have taken important steps to mitigate concussions in the game. Whether it's the new spotter program the league is using, the hybrid icing rule, or the "dark" and "quiet" rooms, these are all important steps which I'm sure will have a positive impact. But this does not address the larger problem. Solutions need to start in our minor hockey programs. Solutions also need to start in our classrooms.

Rowan's Law addresses the fact that we need more education in the classroom by making concussion awareness mandatory in Ontario's curriculum. Ontario teachers do not presently have to teach about concussions at all. They don't have to teach what concussions are, how to prevent them and what to do if you're injured.

Rowan's Law also ensures that coaches and fellow players have the tools to better identify and treat concussions when they happen. It ensures that these athletes don't return to play until they've been medically cleared to do so.

Following Rowan Stringer's death, the coroner outlined 49 sensible, pragmatic recommendations. It's now our job, as legislators, to do our part. Following passage

of this bill, both schools and sports organizations will have a year to figure out how to implement these regulations, meaning that students, children and young adults can continue to lead healthy and active lifestyles and reap the rewards of participating in team sports and do so, most importantly, in a safe manner.

Rowan's parents addressed members of the gallery in the media studio a couple of weeks ago about Rowan's Law. They spoke about their daughter's love for rugby and about the value they saw come out of it. Addressing the concussion problem is not about banning contact in sports or banning contact sports in schools. It's about the larger problem of education and awareness.

Mr. and Mrs. Stringer also spoke about the need to take action—immediate action—to address this growing problem, so that no other family has to go through what they went through. I can't imagine how harrowing it was.

While I spoke primarily about hockey here today, concussions are prevalent in all sports—in soccer, football, rugby and basketball, just to name a few—at both the amateur and professional levels. It is estimated that one in five sports-related injuries are head injuries. Concussions can happen in day-to-day life as well, as they are not limited to the athletic sphere. An estimated one million people suffer from concussion-related injuries across North America. Concussions are a problem that we need to address.

Rowan's Law is an important bill. If passed, it will be the first concussion legislation of its kind in Canada, and we can all be proud of that, in honour of Rowan Stringer. It would be a wonderful legacy.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to speak in support of this bill. I am very proud of my friend and colleague from Nepean–Carleton for her work on this, ensuring that Rowan's legacy lives on, helping to save lives.

It has been incredible to see the level of tri-partisanism in the launch of this bill, and I hope to see it continue in its passage and through the implementation of the coroner's recommendations.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I, too, want to thank Rowan's parents for being here today and for sharing the story of how they lost their daughter and how her tragic death was completely preventable, if only people knew.

I come from the health care sector. I worked in a children's treatment centre, and I've worked with many, many kids who have had a traumatic brain injury, who have had concussions and who have had secondary concussions. I'm a physiotherapist. We would see those kids in physio, and you could see the damage that had been done to their brain function, whether it was what we called a higher-order neurocognitive deficit where knowledge that they used to have, they were not able to recollect anymore, or, in physio, we would see lots of lower-level structure concussions, which are when the brainstem, the spinal cord, the cerebellum—there's a thing called proprioception. We don't need to see our body parts to know where they are in three dimensions.

All athletes rely on that, to be able to kick a ball with your foot without looking at the ball but looking at the people coming at you, and to be able to dribble a ball when you play basketball while you look at where you're going, not looking at your ball. We're all able to do this, because we have a well-functioning neural system that allows us proprioception.

But once those kids would get a concussion, those tasks would become impossible for them to do. Sure, there are physiotherapy treatments for them, but very few of them are actually identified as a concussion, actually receive treatment and actually make it to physiotherapy. For the rest of them, they're left with basically living with a traumatic brain injury that was never diagnosed, that was never treated, that was never helped. But all of this, Speaker—all of it—is all preventable.

1510

I see all the goodwill in this House today. If the story of Rowan can be shared with every single person in this province so that the 49 recommendations that have been made after the inquest into her death are actually brought together in a meaningful way to inform the laws of this province, we will have all won. A big winner will be our health care system, because—although it's not always nice to talk money in these times—we are talking close to \$50 million a year that we spend because of first and second concussions that are picked up and treated most of the time a little bit too late.

We have this opportunity here to bring this level of knowledge and education to everyone so that every parent, everybody who works with children, everybody involved in sport can recognize concussions for what they are. They are traumatic brain injuries that require action immediately. They are not something that you negotiate with your coach, "Oh, I will go sit on the bench," No. It is a traumatic brain injury that needs to be acted upon right away.

To get this message out, we need to continue to get the goodwill in this House, to get Rowan's story, and to make sure that we take this tragedy and turn it into an action plan that everybody can buy into, so that years from now we will look back and say, "This is when we turned the page. When those brave parents brought their story forward after losing their daughter, we passed this bill and then things started to turn for the better. Now we don't see those kids in physiotherapy anymore, because they get recognized for what they are the minute that the concussion happens."

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: It is with pride that I stand today to speak to Bill 149. I want to start out by extending my sincere condolences to the family of Rowan Stringer, for whom this legislation is named. I also want to thank you for your tireless efforts to move this issue forward in our community and in our province. Thank you for your hard work.

In addition, my thoughts and prayers are with all Ontario families whose lives have been impacted by concussion injuries.

This legislation is the first of its kind in Canada, and I applaud all the members for bringing it forward. With the implementation of Rowan's Law, the government will increase awareness and education about concussion injuries.

As a mother of two, I know just how nerve-racking it can be to stand on the sidelines while your son or daughter is involved in a sport. Growing up, my kids played hockey, rugby and soccer. Alongside the other parents, I would watch with mixed emotions: As you're enthusiastically cheering your kids on, you're also dreading the possibility that they could be seriously hurt. I especially felt that way watching them play hockey and rugby.

In the event that a child does suffer a head injury, Bill 149 will ensure that help is nearby.

Concussions are the most common form of traumatic brain injury. While most people recover within a few weeks, experts say about 15% will keep experiencing significant symptoms for much longer. Diagnosis can be difficult because evidence of a concussion cannot be found using an MRI or CT scan.

This is why it's so important that people in key roles are informed enough to recognize the signs of a concussion. By providing education on sport-related concussions to athletes, coaches and parents, Bill 149 will give people the right tools to know when to seek medical help. I've sat there alongside my kids when they took a hit in hockey and wondered late into the night whether they were okay.

It's estimated that 160,000 Canadians suffer brain injuries each year and over a million Canadians are living with the effects. While there are numerous ways you can get a concussion, experts say that 30% of all traumatic brain injuries involve young children and youth. Think about that. Most of them happen while taking part in sports and recreational activities.

As parents, we must do everything we can to protect our children. But this can be difficult because the symptoms of concussion can be similar to other illnesses and so often go unnoticed or get mistaken for something else. Of course, this information should in no way deter parents from encouraging their kids to take part in sports—quite the opposite. In fact, parents can be reassured that Bill 149 will provide a safer environment for their children to enjoy sports and stay active. This legislation will ensure the public is better prepared in the event of a concussion and able to prevent further injury because they know when to go and see a doctor. A concussion is an injury to the brain. It's something that should never be taken lightly.

I want to thank the family of Rowan Stringer for their tireless efforts to increase public awareness on this serious issue. I congratulate all the members who have been working hard on this important piece of legislation that will protect the health and wellness of our young athletes and our children.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Harris: While it's always an honour to stand in this House, today's discourse takes on added significance as we in the Ontario Legislature consider the first concussion legislation in Canada for young athletes.

We thank the member for Nepean–Carleton for all her work, her passion on this issue, in bringing forward Rowan's Law today for the future safety of our young athletes and participants across Ontario.

As we've heard and as is well-documented, Rowan's Law was born from the concerns that emerged and the subsequent coroner's inquest following the tragic death of 17-year-old Rowan Stringer due to the impacts of a concussion she received playing rugby. While Rowan's story is the launching point that has brought us to where we are today, I am certain every one of us knows of similar either tragic or alarming stories from the areas we represent, where concussions to our young people have taken their toll.

In my area of the region of Waterloo, a few years ago, we heard stories of a Waterloo region family, the Van Damme family, who were calling for action following their then 17-year-old daughter Jill's on-court concussion with the Waterloo Tigers volleyball team. In her case it was days later that the concussion was confirmed, after she was crippled by throbbing headaches. She had to quit sports, miss her semi-formal and skip exams. It was four months before she felt normal again.

It's for that reason that we, as a provincial Parliament here, provide a provincial response. Organizations and individuals are also to be commended for stepping up with programming and awareness initiatives to get that ball rolling on protecting our young athletes from the debilitating impact of concussions.

Locally—as we heard, Fitz Vanderpool is here in the audience—we've also seen Kitchener Rangers star defenceman Ben Fanelli's Head Strong campaign, focused on raising awareness about brain injuries. Ben, whose career was halted by a brain injury, speaks to groups and at events throughout Ontario to increase awareness for brain injuries and, specifically, brain injuries in sport.

I feel that today, with that momentum, we're building through a united call for a provincial response to head injuries impacting our young people. We are taking very real steps to ensure that help will be available throughout Ontario. That's why it's so important that we are discussing this here, on the last day of debate, before we head to our homes and families, because we've all heard the stories; we've all seen the devastating impacts; and we simply can't continue to just shake our heads, shrug our shoulders, thinking it's all part of the game.

It's not, Speaker, or at least it shouldn't be. Concussions should not be part of the game. Headaches, dizziness, slurred speech and nausea—for sometimes months on end—should not be part of the game. Certainly, the fatal tragedy that befell young Rowan should be no part of any game we allow our young people to participate in in this province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I wanted to stand with my colleagues from Ottawa South, from Kitchener–Waterloo and from Nepean–Carleton to thank them and commend them for bringing Rowan's Law, Bill 149, forward. I also wanted to recognize, along with all the members here, the friends and family of Rowan Stringer in the stands today and just commend you for being here. I know it's very difficult.

1520

As a long-time pediatric and adult critical care nurse, I had to deal with some of these situations and be involved in some of the discussions around head injury. I wanted to say today that my story could have been your family's story. I have a 21-year-old son, Alex McGarry, who is very athletic, and he throws his body into all play. As a matter of fact, he won an award for football, which he did in grade 9. The coach said, when he presented him his award, "Alex actually throws his body to any play," and that worried me.

In rugby he now, looking back, recognizes that he had two or three concussions. The first time it happened, the coach said he had his bell rung and he should probably sit quietly for a couple of days. Even as a critical care nurse, I've got to say, the awareness wasn't there for us to be able to take him out of all activities. So he launched himself back into rugby, and thank goodness he didn't have a story like Rowan's.

Fast-forward a few years, with a few more injuries in football and in rugby, and grade 12 was Alex's year. He was coming off post-concussion, doing well, valedictorian and co-president at his school, and unfortunately he decided to go back into football and had another concussion. Three years later, it's post-concussion syndrome right now. He's now ready to get back into post-secondary education, three years after his colleagues went there.

So I understand fully. I cannot tell you how passionate I am about this particular bill. I will do everything I can do on my side of the House to make this go forward. As I said, I fully support it and it's a long time coming. Thank you very much for all your work.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to speak in favour of Bill 149. As our party's critic for tourism, culture and sport, I want to commend my good friend Lisa MacLeod, from Nepean–Carleton, and I also want to thank Mr. Fraser and Ms. Fife for co-sponsoring this bill.

I played a lot of sports over the years, and I played very strongly. I remember the game before my high school football championship, in practice I had a head-to-head, helmet-to-helmet contact; to use the word that Mrs. McGarry used, I had my bell rung. I remember not getting treated, not getting diagnosed, and I remember being told that there were lots of people who were willing to go in that day if I didn't want to play. I played, and I probably shouldn't have played. I didn't get another concussion, but I shouldn't have played. I should have let those two or three other guys play for me. Things were

different back then, and I think this is why a bill like this is so important.

To the Stringer family, to all the people who are here today, all the doctors and all the experts: Thank you for doing what you're doing with this bill. This is such an important bill, not just for Rowan's life and her legacy, but for all those other children and all the people who didn't understand what had happened.

I had, I think, my second concussion when I was a men's league hockey player. Some people call it the "beer league," and probably that was what I should have been doing rather than playing hockey. The night that I got my head cross-checked to the ice, my brain told me that I just popped up. In reality, I was unconscious for 45 seconds on the ice in a pool of my own blood. While I may have gotten the 12 stitches treated, I should have done a lot more. I should have been more vocal. I should have been a stronger advocate.

As the critic, I have a message for the minister, and all the ministers and all the government. Regardless of Bill 149's passage, we need this committee. So today, after private members' business, I believe that the Minister of Children and Youth Services, the Ministers of Education, Health and Long-Term Care and the minister who I question, the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport—I think we need to get a few names put together for this committee. Regardless of the legislative process, I think we need to start the work today to have Rowan Stringer's advisory committee created. I think there can be a lot of work done. There can be a lot of education.

I want to thank my good friend Lisa MacLeod for being the champion for Bill 149. Let's get it passed.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for Nepean–Carleton. You have two minutes.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: To all members of this assembly, I have a deep and abiding respect for all of you, but none more than I do now, for sharing your stories.

I would like to specifically name the members for Ottawa South and Kitchener–Waterloo for going through this journey with me; the Minister of Sport for standing here today and indicating his support; the leader of the official opposition; the third party health critic; the member from Halton; the member from Kitchener–Conestoga; the member from Cambridge—thank you for sharing your story about your son—and of course, my friend from Leeds–Grenville, for sharing his story.

I'd like to acknowledge the member from Durham, who walked across the floor to tell me about his son, an NCAA star in football, who has had a couple of concussions and wants this bill to pass just as much as we do; and the member from Sudbury, who, when he was a federal member, had he been successful, would have had the first concussion law as a federal member of Parliament.

My friends, we have waited for far too long. We have a few months more ahead of us. I am asking each of you to join with me and the Stringer family and the two members who are co-sponsoring this bill to call for its passage

before the House rises in June. We have enough time to do that. There is enough will here. It's not hard work.

I ask you all to join with me and go home today and use hashtag #RowansLaw to continue with the awareness. I ask that you all talk to your friends and your family about their experiences, because I can tell you, in June, when the Stringers first approached me, I really didn't know a thing about concussions. Today I'm learning so much more about how impactful they can be, particularly to young people, that I don't think we can wait much longer.

With that, thank you. I would invite all members up to the Progressive Conservative caucus room to celebrate what I hope will be the passage of second reading today, with the Stringer family and all of our invited guests today.

Thank you all very much.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you to all members. We will take the vote on this item at the end of private members' business.

CY AND RUBY'S ACT
(PARENTAL RECOGNITION), 2015
LOI CY ET RUBY DE 2015
SUR LA RECONNAISSANCE
PARENTALE

Ms. DiNovo moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 137, An Act to amend the Children's Law Reform Act, the Vital Statistics Act and other Acts with respect to parental recognition / Projet de loi 137, Loi modifiant la Loi portant réforme du droit de l'enfance, la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil et d'autres lois en ce qui a trait à la reconnaissance parentale.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation. The member for Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's an absolute honour. It seems to be the afternoon of the child here at Queen's Park. It's fitting, because we're moving into the season where we celebrate children. Whether they're spinning dreidels or whether they're opening presents under Christmas trees, this is the season for children.

Quite frankly, people here know that I'm a United Church minister by trade, and in the Christian tradition, of course, it's the season where we celebrate a birth. We celebrate the birth of a particular baby.

This bill, Cy and Ruby's law, is about babies. It's about the joy of babies, that we love them, that we celebrate them and that we celebrate them no matter to what family they're born. Whether they're born to a same-sex family, whether they're born with three parents involved, whether they're born to a man and a woman, we are celebrating those children, and those children should have equal rights, as should their parents.

In fact, it is the day for human rights. It is the United Nations International Human Rights Day, so that's

another great reason that December 10 be the day that we pass Cy and Ruby's law.

This is one of those no-brainer bills, and I have to say that up front because, first of all, just about every other province in Canada already has, in their law, a law that covers same-sex and LGBTQ folks at birth. We don't. We don't, Madam Speaker, and that is a bizarre oversight.

It's not only a bizarre oversight; it's in contradiction to our Charter of Rights. It's certainly in contradiction to our Human Rights Code that talks about both trans rights, now with Toby's Act having passed, and also, of course, sexual preference.

1530

I want to give some thanks to some folk. Joanna Radbord is here. She's the lawyer who really has spear-headed most of the research on this. Kirsti Mathers McHenry is here; I'm going to tell her story a bit. She is one of the mothers of Cy and Ruby. Ruby is here today; Princess Ruby, by the way, it says on her name tag. Cy is at the squirming age, so Cy isn't here, but he's here in spirit. We also, shortly, will have many more folk. They're all just moving to the gallery over here as well. I'm going to rattle off some of their names. We've got Lisa, Ashley, Cassandra, Julia, Emery, Devin, Amanda and Lil. We've got Henry, Nathaniel, Alida, Caroline, Rob, Kelly, Elizabeth, Jared, Joanna, Davina, Ian, Lara, Linda and, again, I've already introduced Joanna and Kirsti Mathers McHenry as well.

Let me start by telling—

Interruption.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Yes, we will have some babies here.

Let me start by telling Kristi's story, because I think this gets to the heart of it and speaks to what we all who are parents have experienced.

Kirsti Mathers McHenry's wife was in labour—Kirsti, mother of Cy and Ruby—and the unthinkable happened. There were complications and the doctors warned Kirsti that there was a chance that her wife could die. At that moment, holding her newborn baby, she watched doctors frantically try to save her wife's life. It also dawned on her at that moment that she might be raising the child as a single parent.

If that nightmare wasn't horrifying enough, Kirsti also realized she would not be a legal parent to her own child. I'm going to quote her. She said, "As I held my wife's hand and snuck glances at the two rolls of paper unspooling and recording the two heartbeats, I went through the possibilities. If my wife died, I might not be able to leave the hospital with our baby. Who would be able to? My in-laws. They were supportive. Maybe the hospital would let the baby leave with them. Our sperm donor—he was known to us—was another possibility. Maybe he could pretend to be more than a donor uncle for a morning and get us home."

She goes on to say that it ended okay: "My wife was okay and our daughter was okay, and we left the hospital together after visits from family. Months later, we

obtained a court date and the three of us, with our lawyer, went to court to make me a legal mommy."

Now, who among us would want to go through an experience like that, then have to pay a lawyer some \$2,000 or so, and then go to court to adopt our own children? This is the case in Ontario and this is what Cy and Ruby's Act would change. It would make sure that lesbian co-mothers who use donor sperm would be able to include both mothers' particulars on the child's birth registration form. They can't do that now.

The act would also allow for the recognition of an additional parent, such as a known sperm donor, if the parents agree. Or if it's two men, the birth mother—the woman who has carried the actual child. Research suggests that about half of lesbian couples choose a known sperm donor. The current law forces same-sex couples to, as I said, adopt their own children—jump through hurdles for legal recognition.

This is also trans-positive. The act removes all gendered language from birth registration forms. Trans men who give birth will no longer be forced to identify as "mother," which is discriminatory according to our Human Rights Code, and of course denies their lived reality. This will allow families with more than two parents to register the birth of their child and to be immediately and equally recognized. There will no longer be a distinction between the person who gives birth and the child's other parents.

Now, the courts have already weighed in on this. In 2006, in the Rutherford case, Justice Rivard found the Ontario birth registration scheme to be discriminatory because it excluded non-biological lesbian co-mothers. It's almost 10 years later and the government has not cured its discriminatory scheme so as to better recognize assisted reproduction and the equality rights of LGBTQ parents.

In 2007, the Court of Appeal for Ontario ruled that there is a legislative gap in the scheme for parental recognition. They said that it may be in a child's best interests to recognize more than two parents.

Really, what we're asking for here is to end this fight and to end potential fights that are upcoming. There will be many charter challenges if this bill is not passed—and by "passed," I don't mean just second reading; I mean passed into law.

I met with the Attorney General yesterday. Madame Meilleur was very supportive in terms of trying to make this law as quickly as possible, to preclude the possibility that more parents have to go to court to both adopt their children and also to challenge the Ontario government—taxpayers' dollars badly not at work in defending what should be a no-brainer.

Let me tell you another story. This is Raquel and Deanna's story. Here are Raquel's words:

"A short while after Thora entered the world it became obvious that Deanna was hemorrhaging badly and her body was not responding to the care the midwives were giving her. The midwives transferred Deanna's care to the surgical team...." She goes on to speak about—I'm

running out of time—a very similar story to Kirsti's, where her wife was in distress and she didn't know whether she'd be able to leave the hospital with the baby. Again, it was a possible tragedy which could have been made worse by our discriminatory laws here.

I want to finish with my own story, because I think the personal is political. My partner of 17 years—we are a blended family. My children are not his children. The only child in a Portuguese Roman Catholic family, I have to tell you, and he was the known sperm donor to two of our best friends, who are lesbian mothers in Ottawa. I want to give a shout-out to them, Caitlin and Jodi Fisher, and to our two daughters, Harriet and Stella, who are now 13 and 10 and who were conceived by my partner and those two mothers.

I want to tell you about the fear that everyone went through about possible challenges to their parenting at that time. We made it. We went the lawyer route. We had it all drawn up.

I have to tell you: This is the new Canadian family, folks. This Christmas, those children, Stella and Harriet, who are our children by extension in our new, real Canadian family, will be visiting their grandparents at Christmastime, as they have every Christmas since they were about two years old. They are loved and welcomed as the only biological grandchildren my partner's parents will ever have.

Quite frankly, if we can work it out, this government can work it out. If we in our family can love our children the way we do, this government can love all of our children the way they should be loved. That's really what we're asking here and that's really what we're looking for here: to make that love recognized in law so that we don't force parents to go through the hurdles that they need to go through, and so that Cy and Ruby—and all the Cys and Rubys in the future, all the gaybies in the future—don't have to go through what they had to go through and what our children in Ottawa had to go through as well.

I'm going to leave some time. I'm sure I've left lots out. The Premier has weighed in on this. The Premier has supported this; thank you, Premier. The Attorney General supports this; thank you, Attorney General. Really, this is a situation that needs to happen. It needs to happen post second reading. It needs to happen quickly.

Again, we have two choices here. Really, they're Christmas, Hanukkah, Festival of Lights and Kwanzaa choices. They're choices for children or against children; for equal rights for all babies and all families or discriminatory laws that see some babies as more legitimate than other babies and some families as more legitimate than other families.

I'll leave it at that. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris): Further debate? I recognize the member from Kingston and the Islands.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have to say, it's nice to see you in that chair.

It is with the greatest honour that I rise today to speak in support of Bill 137, Cy and Ruby's Act (Parental

Recognition), 2015. I would like to thank the member for Parkdale–High Park for introducing it and for all of her hard work advocating for the LGBTQ community.

1540

This bill is an important part of an important conversation about one of the personal and significant decisions that a person will ever make: to become a parent. I have three amazing daughters whom I love with all my heart, even in their teenage years, and who are such a large part of my decision to run as an MPP. I want to do my part to create a better, stronger and more inclusive province for them.

I was very happy to state my support for this bill last week on social media, and I want to thank the many constituents from Kingston and the Islands who wrote to me and called my office in support of this bill. It is this type of belief in fairness and commitment to equality for all that I know and expect from my community. This was also when I learned that Kirsti Mathers McHenry, one of Cy and Ruby's mothers and the force behind the change in this legislation, calls Kingston her hometown and earned her law degree at Queen's University.

After each of their children was born, Kirsti and Jennifer had to go through a long, expensive, emotionally challenging and sometimes humiliating process to get the law to recognize Kirsti as a parent to their two children. I could only imagine Kirsti's fear when her pregnant wife experienced medical complications during her pregnancy. Had the worst happened, Kirsti would have had no legal recognition as Ruby's parent. Nobody should have to go through this.

Currently, in our province, if the sperm donor is known to the two women, a woman married to a woman who gives birth is not automatically considered as a parent. However, if the donor is not known, then the legal parental rights are automatic.

This scenario begs the question, why does a marital spouse who has conceived, planned for the child and rejoiced at his or her birth have to go through a legal process to obtain their equal parental rights? In fact, if you just think about it, same-sex parents have a lot more planning to do than heterosexual parents.

Currently, there is a presumption of legal parental recognition that differentiates LGBTQ couples. Kirsti and Jennifer have applied their legal expertise to make sure that other families do not have to face these challenges when they should be focusing on the overwhelming joys of just being a parent. I want to sincerely thank them for their advocacy.

Now, we've heard it all before, but it is 2015, folks, and modern families in our province come in many different shapes and forms—single parents, two dads, two moms, blended families—and the law needs to address the needs and circumstances of every single one of these families.

I wholeheartedly support the principles underlying this bill, but I want to emphasize that any law reform in this area would need to consider all of the potential scenarios that can arise when assisted reproduction is used, in-

cluding the use of surrogate mothers and multiple parents, while always promoting what is in the best interests of the children involved. I know that there are many people across the province who have stories and experiences to share, and I would encourage them to do so to help us get these changes right and address the needs of all families, including Cy and Ruby's.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to mention an important point about government forms and promoting inclusivity. The current practice when registering births does allow parents the option of manually crossing out the titles "mother" or "father" and replacing them with "parent". However, ServiceOntario and Ontario Shared Services are currently developing a PDF version of the Statement of Live Birth to be provided on request. This form provides a drop-down menu of additional titles a parent may choose when certifying their child's birth.

Our government administers thousands of forms in ServiceOntario and, in consultation with Ontario Shared Services, has been reviewing these forms to make further alterations, if required, to improve inclusiveness and equality. That's a good step forward, and I want to thank the Minister of Government and Consumer Services for making this a priority.

I will always advocate and be committed to supporting all Ontario families and protecting the best interests of children. Ontario is well known for its equity laws and championing diversity and inclusion. We were among the first to legalize same-sex marriage, more than a decade ago. It is time to build on this reputation and ensure that LGBTQ parents have equal legal parental rights. We are committed to working with the member opposite to carefully consider the impacts of these changes.

It is so imperative that we take the time to get this right and consider the implications of any changes we make, so that other families do not have to go through this process that Kirsti and Jennifer did. I look forward to working with the member from Parkdale-High Park to ensure that we do exactly that.

Thank you. Merci beaucoup. Meegwetch.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Tim Hudak: My colleague from Thornhill and I will be addressing the bill from the member from Parkdale-High Park this afternoon.

I just want to start out with a story, as I sometimes do. Growing up in the border town of Fort Erie, a child of the 1970s and early 1980s, I lived in the north end of town. It was a great neighbourhood to grow up in—a lot of boys—great for road hockey, playing baseball and taking hikes through the woods.

One friend of mine named Bob—we've known each other for a long time. It's hard to remember now exactly what year it was. I think it was sort of late 1970s. I think I was about 11 or 12 at the time.

As the expression goes, his father came out of the closet and announced that he was a gay man. At the time, in Fort Erie, this was scandalous. Jack was his name. I can still picture Jack. He always had a smart business suit

on. I think he actually worked in Buffalo. He was a business leader; he just looked totally corporate—a friendly guy, with a tough streak. That's the last I ever saw him. He disappeared. I remember parents around us kids talking in hushed tones. This wasn't a topic that you addressed. The only thing I remember is one of the parents talking about, "Oh, move to the Village in Toronto."

Now, to me, Toronto was sort of the Eaton Centre, Maple Leaf Gardens and then Yonge Street up and down the middle. The biggest city—I didn't know what the heck a "village" was in Toronto. "They're living a bohemian lifestyle" was another thing that they said back at this point in time. We didn't have, obviously, Google at that point. I looked up "bohemian" and then pictured people wearing Hawaiian shirts, and the village like in Gilligan's Island or something like that. I tried to figure out what this all meant.

Fast-forward to today, raising my own daughters in a very different world—thankfully, one with a lot less discrimination and a lot more understanding. There will be new forms. It's not gone; it still exists, sadly so. But my daughter Miller will have a different experience. She'll know parents; two moms, two dads. She'll know parents who identify as "parent" and "neither", or three.

Maitland is too little, but Miller will now visualize, I think—my colleague talked about Christmas. If there's a three-parent family, she's going to first think, "Well, that's six grandparents. That's a lot of presents for Christmastime." That's how she'll visualize that.

I know that if you were suffered persecution or discrimination, if you were denied benefits, this would probably be offensive, to an extent. But there has been, considering my time, when we started, more progress and, in the grand scheme of civil rights battles, rapid progress. I see my own evolution in my thinking as an individual, as an MPP, on issues like equal marriage.

I commend the member for Parkdale-High Park, who has, in her initiative here, forced members of the assembly to contemplate a new round of rights issues where, quite frankly—we walked through the examples—we're far behind the times. I've always known the member, since when she was elected in 2006, to be one who will stand up for rights and push us to make sure that we update our laws to match those rights.

There are three components of her bill that I want to speak to. I realize that just with my anecdote, I've taken up a lot of my time.

1550

First, the bill allows partners in a same-sex marriage to have a child through the use of a donor or surrogate and for both members of the same-sex couple to be considered parents of that child legally. It makes a lot of sense. The member gave some heartwarming, moving examples of such. The bill removes the terms "mother" and "father" from birth certificates and replaces them with "parent."

The third part I wanted to talk about is that the bill allows for more than two parents to be included on said birth certificates. The member's staff was kind enough to

give me a lot of background material too on the legislation and actually said that this bill will bring Ontario in line with other provinces and remove a major source of unnecessary stress and legal costs for LGBTQ parents, who are forced to fight a discriminatory system.

In 2006, there was a case before the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, *M.D.R. v. Ontario*, the deputy registrar of the province at the time fighting two women to be counted as parents of a child. The court applied section 15 of the charter, discrimination based on sex, and ultimately agreed with the applicants. Despite this, our legislation since 2006—it shocked me when I looked into this—had not been updated to reflect that reality.

During the *M.D.R.* case, a young 12-year-old girl affected by the legislation had moving testimony. She said:

“I just want both my moms recognized as my moms. Most of my friends have not had to think about things like this—they take for granted that their parents are legally recognized as their parents. I would like my family recognized the same way as any other family, not treated differently because both my parents are women.

“It would help if the government and the law recognized that I have two moms. It would help more people to understand. It would make my life easier. I want my family to be accepted and included, just like everybody else’s family.”

From a 12-year-old girl at the time. So good for the member in bringing this forward, a change in the legislation.

I am going to raise a concern that I hope will be addressed in committee—and I am supporting the legislation today. I think committee will help us look at things. It talks about making the term “parent” for neutrality here. I understand that a trans man who gives birth may not want to identify as “mother” or “father”; they will use the term “parent.”

One thing you learn too intuitively: We all know we love our kids and the attachment. When you have them, you just get that in your gut, that amazing connection. This is what it’s all about: love, at the end of the day. I still have the same thing about being a father and a dad. I wonder if the member will consider, as part of this, that on the birth certificate we could use “father,” “mother” or “parent,” if that works. I’m sure we’ll hear at committee if people have strong opinions on either side, but I think that actually is inclusive and includes all options for the parents in how they identify themselves.

I’m taking up too much time. On the third one, the notion of three parents, as she brought up, again, there are strong court indications about why this is necessary, and past time as well. In *A.A. v. B.B.*, the court talked about how there was no doubt that when the law was written, nobody would have anticipated that reproductive technology would have come that way to allow for this option—another good initiative that the member has in her bill, and I certainly support that change.

I apologize to my colleague; I’ve spoken too long. I’m proud to support the bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Miss Monique Taylor: I would just like to start by thanking my colleague the member from Parkdale–High Park and letting her know how proud I am of the work that she’s done in the LGBTQ community, in always bringing issues forward to change the date of how we’re looking at our families and how we’re moving forward. Huge kudos to her for the work she’s done across the entire community.

I would like to also thank and commend others who I’m sure have put lots of hours and work into this bill. I know it takes a community; it takes a lot of people and a team to make good legislation, and to make sure that that legislation gets to the place where it needs to be. So congratulations to all of them.

The basic notion of this bill is really quite simple: All parents should have equal rights under the law. It sounds straightforward enough, but the law, and changing the law, as we all know, is very complex, at best. It’s made quite evident by the 21 pages that make up the bill.

A huge amount of work has gone into this, and the member for Parkdale–High Park, as I said, deserves all of our gratitude, along with her staff, for the work that they’ve done.

I would also like to thank Kirsti Mathers McHenry, whose personal experience with her own children encouraged her to be the driving force behind this legislation. I’m sure that many others have added their thoughts and advice along the way.

As I said, the idea that all parents should have the same rights is a pretty straightforward concept. It makes sense that loving families, no matter what sexual orientation, should have the same protections and rights, to allow their families to thrive and be secure.

As the NDP critic for children and youth services and also as a mother, I always think about what is best for the child. There is no doubt in my mind that every child should have the right to grow up with the full support of loving parents, whoever they may be. I know it isn’t always possible, but the very least we can do is not put obstacles in the way that would deprive them of that. But that is what we are doing under our current laws. The fact that Ontario law is not keeping up with Ontario society is problematic.

The history of LGBTQ rights in Canada is one of court case after court case after court case over a number of years—of battles that have been won. We have moved forward, but for some reason our laws have not kept up with the inevitable results of those winning battles.

It has been legal for same-sex couples to adopt since 1995. In Ontario, same-sex marriages have been legal for 12 years. Thousands upon thousands of healthy children are growing up in loving homes with same-sex parents. Their numbers are growing each year, but it’s not a new thing; it’s been happening for years. As we grow to better understand, respect and celebrate our differences, our appreciation for everyone’s human rights becomes healthier. That’s what is happening in a developing society.

Scientific advances also force us to reconsider the laws we have. Development of in vitro fertilization and surrogate motherhood demand that we move beyond the so-called traditional definition of parents. Yet still, there is a gap in our laws that says a woman who is married to a woman who gives birth is not automatically a parent if they use a known sperm donor.

They may have been together in a stable relationship for years; they may have thought very carefully about what it meant to bring a child into this world, as many of us consciously make that choice, and together, made the decision that yes, that was what they wanted: that together they were committed to raising a child. Yet still, we would need to go to court and go through an adoption process before they could give the child the security it deserves. We know the court process in Ontario and the long, excruciating forms of paperwork, time and money that would go into that process. It's really not necessary to have to have all that red tape.

We have already heard of the anguish that can be caused when a parent is not guaranteed the right to look after their child if something should happen to the birth mother. That is bad for the child. That's not right: Same-sex parents should not have to adopt their own children, and the courts agree. In 2006, as we heard from the previous speaker, Justice Rivard found the Ontario birth registrations process to be discriminatory because it excluded non-biological lesbian co-mothers.

In 2007, an Ontario Court of Appeal said that there is a legislative gap in the scheme for parental recognition. It may be in a child's best interests to recognize more than two parents.

It's time to close that gap. Today, this bill has been brought forward for us, and it's time to move it forward and to catch up with places like Quebec, BC, Manitoba and Alberta. It's time that our laws reflected society's reality and stopped discriminating against LGBTQ families and, quite frankly, families of all different types, whoever they may be in this province, knowing that if we put the child's best interests first in our minds, this is what the child would want: for both parents to be legally their parents without having to go through a tremendous exertion of time and energy. How would that make that child feel? That their family had to go to court to make them legitimate, I think, is a sad way for a child who is loved by both of their parents already.

1600

So I again commend the member, my colleague from Parkdale-High Park, and all of the people who are here today to support this wonderful, fabulous initiative, moving forward into a future that is definitely more inclusive and brighter and safer and better for our children in a loving, healthy, family environment. Thank you, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Han Dong: Before I begin, I want to say another hello to Princess Ruby. You look fantastic today, and you will receive many, many gifts in the upcoming Christmas.

I just want to acknowledge that I did receive lots of e-mails in my constituency office. That's when I first learned about this bill. My first reaction to it was, "Wow, I didn't know it wasn't in place already," because we do recognize same-sex marriage, from many years ago; I heard a speaker mention this earlier. This comes as something that you would think had already happened, as we recognize same-sex marriage.

I want to thank the member from Parkdale-High Park for bringing forward this bill, for bringing this discussion to the Legislature. You were right. You made a very good point, that it is very fitting to have this discussion today, as today is the international Human Rights Day. As we talk about the rights of parents and how our system should be working for everyone in this great province, I would encourage everyone to take a moment today and reflect on all the rights we enjoy: human rights, economic rights, civil rights, legal, social. These are the rights that are available to us.

I remember the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade said in his statement that not too long ago, residential schools, the head tax and concentration camps all took place in this great country we call home. But today we have very supportive laws in place to make sure all human rights are protected.

It is very difficult for some parents, especially in the LGBTQ community, to go through all this red tape and bureaucracy and get themselves registered as parents. I just think that the legislation must be kept up to date to reflect the modern society that we all enjoy.

I want to leave some time for my colleague to speak to this bill. I support the underlying spirit of this bill and again, I want to thank the member for bring this discussion to this House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise today and speak on Bill 137, Cy and Ruby's Act (Parental Recognition).

Just this morning, I just want to say—and I have permission to use their first names—that I spoke to Mitchell, who is married to Oren. Mitchell is actually my sister-in-law's nephew. Mitchell and Oren got married and arranged with a friend of theirs who donated eggs and a surrogate mother, and—obviously you can understand how complicated these things are—they were very lucky to have twins, Eytan and Yael.

I asked Mitchell, "What happened when you had to get the birth certificate?" He said they had to go to court and they had to get a declaration of parentage. It took six months. I didn't ask what it cost, but it was formal. They had to show DNA, with a declaration from the surrogate mother. This greatly delayed an application for passports, so they couldn't fly on any trips until all this was over with, and then they could apply for a passport.

Anything that causes delays and causes problems and causes difficulty and costs money, I don't think is something that we should be supporting here in the House. Just for that reason, I think that we need to move forward and get this to committee.

In terms of applications, Mitchell said that it's "anti-quoted," but it doesn't ruin his life. Then he also said, "But leaving gender out wouldn't hurt anyone" either. I think those are very good points, and it's not just about birth certificates. It's about school applications, applying for summer camps, as well as after-school programs or on weekends.

I asked Mitchell about co-parenting, and he said that he actually has friends—two females and two males—who have been co-parenting very well for 12 years without any problems, but he knows of other situations where things got difficult. It's interesting—he said, and I'm quoting again, "For my friends, I think it's great," but he does have some concerns about how complicated it can become. We all know, Mr. Speaker, that as soon as you involve even one more parent, the complication rate isn't just slightly more; it's probably 10 times more complicated because relationships change, people want to move away and have career changes. You can see the real tug of war in terms of co-parenting when there are more than two parents, but it doesn't mean it can't be done. There are many successful examples. Again, I look forward to hearing what co-parenting parents have to say, as well as some of the experts in the field.

We heard the member from Hamilton Mountain, as well as the member from Parkdale–High Park, who spoke about other provinces, ServiceOntario and how people have had to adopt their own children. It's hard to even say those words. As a parent myself of four children, it's very self-explanatory: These are your children; they're going to stay your children and nobody can ever take that away from you, no matter what happens in your relationships, your health or your partner's health.

In a way, this is the new multi-multiculturalism, Mr. Speaker: different types of relationships and different types of nuclear families. Just as it was a struggle for many Canadians to understand different cultures, different neighbourhoods, different communities, I think sometimes it's a struggle for people to address changing dynamics. It's not enough to just watch *Modern Family* on TV. There's more to it than that. There are the legal ramifications. There are ramifications in terms of having health care benefits with your work, whether that child is covered, under whose benefits in terms of life insurance, in terms of even the beneficiaries on bank accounts, RSPs, investments and things like that.

I think that's what's important for us to address, not just to come up and talk about Mitchell and Oren and all the other wonderful people who are here today and all their relationships, which we support of course, but to talk about the legal ramifications and what it all means in terms of work, insurance and things like that.

It's the holiday season. Mitchell, Oren, Eytan and Yael are going to be celebrating Hanukkah this week, as am I. But to the many children who are going to be celebrating Christmas soon, it's the holiday time and it's very important that we focus on what is in the best interests of the children, because that's what it's really about and that's what we're here to ensure.

I'm looking forward to seeing Mitchell, Oren, Eytan and Yael in Mexico because we're going to be kind of overlapping on all of our extended families and all of our different connections. I'm looking forward to seeing them around the new year time and celebrating with them.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It is, of course, my privilege to stand in this Legislature and add my voice to the debate.

I'd like to take a moment to welcome the families here today who obviously, of course, love their children and who are here at Queen's Park advocating for their families.

It is my honour, as always, to rise in this Legislature to discuss a piece of legislation on behalf of my constituents in Oshawa and people across the province. Today it is especially an honour as we are discussing a very important bill that will defend the rights of same-sex parents in Ontario.

I would like to start by thanking my colleague the member from Parkdale–High Park for putting this bill forward and bringing this issue to light. As always, she is a strong advocate for the marginalized and a constant defender of human rights within our province. Today is no different, and for that and for many other things, we thank her. We applaud her efforts, and I look forward to continuing to work with her for years to come in the fight for fairness, equity and social justice. But on to the order at hand.

Today, we are discussing Bill 137, also known as Cy and Ruby's Act, in regard to parental recognition. I would be remiss, Speaker, if I didn't also cordially welcome Princess Ruby here to the Legislature of Ontario.

1610

Sometimes legislation falls behind where we should be as a society. Fortunately, as legislators, we have the ability to make those necessary changes. We just need to keep our eyes open for where the gaps and opportunities are. Often, they are issues of inequality; issues where one group is treated differently than others; issues where the voice of the marginalized has been overlooked and ignored.

What we are discussing today is pretty simple: Heterosexual couples don't have to ask to be recognized as parents; they just are. Queer parents should not have to adopt their own children. Think about what that means. Imagine having to defend the fact that a child is yours because of who you are. Empathy is a powerful thing and it is often what allows us to overcome oppression. Plain and simple, this is a denial of rights. It is a discriminatory practice, and today we have the opportunity to end it.

We've heard about what this bill will do, but I'll explain here as well. If passed—excuse me, when passed, and I'm sure that it will—Cy and Ruby's Act will amend the Children's Law Reform Act and the Vital Statistics Act to eliminate the distinction between the person who gives birth and the child's other parents and allow for the

recognition of an additional parent; for example, a known sperm donor.

It will also remove all gendered language from birth registration forms. We have talked about gendered language before in this Legislature, and I was pleased to speak to it then. I come out of public education—I've talked about this before—and I've taught elementary students up to grade 8, and, regardless of the age, I'll tell you what makes the biggest difference, in my humble opinion: family support. All children need love and support, and families now come in all sorts of shapes, sizes and descriptions. Family might mean a mom and a dad; it might mean a grandma; it might be one parent, two moms or two dads; or it might be step-parents, aunts, uncles or a sibling old enough to be responsible. It can be a legal guardian. Children deserve to be cared for and to feel safe and supported in their homes and in their communities. I wish a home full of love and support for every child. Because as I've said before, it isn't the gender of care; it is the nature of it.

Back to gendered language: It's happening all over. We have the opportunity and the chance here to be pioneers of change. That birth certificate is the first official document that tells us who we are, and tells society who we are. If we can be more open in the definition of what a family can be, then imagine the possibilities in the greater community. We are making society more equitable. Bill 137 will ensure that all children and families in Ontario have equal parental recognition.

As I've said, I'm grateful for the work of my colleague from Parkdale–High Park. We know that she has been a leader, performing the first same-sex marriage in Ontario. The first same-sex marriage that I attended was that of my brother and my brother-in-law. While they have chosen not to be parents, they have many pets instead.

Parenting is not a decision to be taken lightly. Those who have chosen to be parents have the right to love them and be recognized as them. Children have the right to be loved, cherished and to have a family. I am thrilled to stand in support of loving families.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I rise today to address and support this important bill, Bill 137. I would like to once again welcome everyone who has joined us here today to listen to this very important debate, including Princess Ruby, and I know there are a few constituents as well from my riding of Davenport here.

I want to thank the member opposite from Parkdale–High Park for presenting this bill today. And I want to thank the many constituents of my riding of Davenport for reaching out to me this past week to share their thoughts and stories on this bill and how it lends itself to the important conversation about the deeply personal decision to become a parent.

On this side of the House, we are committed to supporting Ontario families and protecting the best interests of children. Our government is also firmly committed to

ensuring that Ontarians, no matter their ethnicity, language, religion, belief, gender identity or sexual orientation, see their rights represented within our borders.

Today, families in our province come in many different shapes and sizes, as we've heard this afternoon: single parents, two mothers, two fathers and blended families. The truth of the matter is that our laws need to address the needs and circumstances of every single one of these families. That's such an integral part of recognizing and respecting the rich diversity here in our province.

I can proudly say that we support the principles underlying this bill. As we continue to debate this bill and as it makes its way through the legislative process, we will have to closely consider the many potential situations that may arise in cases of assisted reproduction, while, most importantly, putting the interests of children first.

Mr. Speaker, I am committed and our government is committed to working with the member from Parkdale–High Park to carefully consider and work through what the impacts of the changes might be and what to do exactly, and to make sure that we do it right.

It has been my pleasure to stand in this House this afternoon in full support of Bill 137.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I thank everyone for their comments.

I now return to the member for Parkdale–High Park. You have two minutes.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Thank you to everyone who weighed in on this. It truly is a moment. As a queer woman, I remember the first demonstration back in 1971, when it was a gay demonstration for rights, on Parliament Hill—and here we are today, where all parties agree. It's actually a moment. It's a progressive and wonderful—it's a holy moment, might I say. I want to thank everyone who is here and everyone who supported this.

Yes, it is shocking that we have to do this. I was shocked that this hadn't changed. We were also shocked last June when we learned that conversion therapy for LGBTQ kids was still going on in this province. So it's time to do the obvious. It's time to get this to committee.

I really appreciated the non-gendered language discussion here, and I appreciated, yes, the implications the member from Thornhill was talking about. It's not just about birth certificates; it's about your whole life. That's true, too.

I want to say a big thank you to my executive assistant, Andrea Houston, for the work she has done on this.

Applause.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Yes, absolutely.

She is a true activist. Thank you, Andrea—drinks to follow.

Again, this is part of a long progression, and I think it's absolutely time to do the right thing.

With that, I'll just say, have an incredibly happy holiday, everyone. I think I'm the last speaker in this

House before we break. Have a wonderful time with all of your diverse families.

To all the children that we get to share our Christmases, our Hanukkahs, our Kwanzas, our festival of lights, and everything else we do, may they all have a wonderful, wonderful life.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE
SENIORS IN THE COMMUNITY
ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION
DES PERSONNES ÂGÉES VULNÉRABLES
DANS LA COLLECTIVITÉ

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal first with ballot item number 12, standing in the name of Ms. Wong.

Ms. Wong has moved second reading of Bill 148, An Act to amend the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 and the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—

Ms. Soo Wong: The Standing Committee on Social Policy.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that the bill be referred to social policy. Agreed? Agreed.

ROWAN'S LAW ADVISORY
COMMITTEE ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE COMITÉ
CONSULTATIF DE LA LOI ROWAN

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Ms. MacLeod has moved second reading of Bill 149, An Act to establish an advisory committee to make recommendations on the jury recommendations made in the inquest into the death of Rowan Stringer.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I refer this bill to the legislative assembly committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested the bill be referred to the legislative assembly committee. Agreed? Agreed.

CY AND RUBY'S ACT
(PARENTAL RECOGNITION), 2015

LOI CY ET RUBY DE 2015
SUR LA RECONNAISSANCE
PARENTALE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Ms. DiNovo has moved second reading of Bill 137, An Act to amend the Children's Law Reform Act, the Vital Statistics Act and other Acts with respect to parental recognition.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j) the bill is being referred to—the member for Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Regulations and private bills.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that it be referred to regulations and private bills. Agreed? Agreed.

Orders of the day?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to revert back to motions.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The deputy House leader has requested unanimous consent to revert to motions. Agreed? Agreed.

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. James J. Bradley: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice with respect to Bill 132, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related matters.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested consent. Do I have consent? Agreed.

Deputy House leader.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move that the Standing Committee on Social Policy be authorized to meet from January 19, 2016, to January 22, 2016, in Toronto, Sault Ste. Marie, Peterborough and London to conduct public hearings on Bill 132, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related matters.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The deputy House leader has moved—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Dispense.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Dispense.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Orders of the day?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The deputy House leader has moved adjournment of the House. All those in favour, please say "aye."

The guy who says "no," I'm throwing you out. All those against, please say "nay."

Interjection: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): He's ejected.

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Mr. Steve Clark: On division.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): On division. Carried. You sure are a difficult gang.

Before I let you go, I would just like to say to everybody, please have a happy holiday and a prosperous new year. We'll see you on Tuesday, February 16, at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1623.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
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Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
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Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
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Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
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Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonnell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC) Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	York–Simcoe Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB) Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Halton Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP) Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Essex Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC) Potts, Arthur (LIB) Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) Rinaldi, Lou (LIB) Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB) Sattler, Peggy (NDP) Scott, Laurie (PC)	Perth–Wellington Beaches–East York Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord Northumberland–Quinte West Guelph London West / London-Ouest Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP) Smith, Todd (PC) Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB) Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB) Taylor, Monique (NDP) Thibeault, Glenn (LIB) Thompson, Lisa M. (PC) Vanthof, John (NDP) Vernile, Daiene (LIB) Walker, Bill (PC) Wilson, Jim (PC)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton Prince Edward–Hastings Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud Toronto–Danforth Mississauga–Erindale Hamilton Mountain Sudbury Huron Bruce Timiskaming–Cochrane Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound Simcoe–Grey	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB) Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakubski, John (PC) Yurek, Jeff (PC) Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB) Vacant	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke Elgin–Middlesex–London Willowdale Whitby–Oshawa	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
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Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo
Han Dong, Michael Harris
Sophie Kiwala, Todd Smith
Monique Taylor
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Soo Wong
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
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Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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John Fraser, Wayne Gates
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Cristina Martins, Randy Pettapiece
Lou Rinaldi
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Jeff Yurek
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Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow
Kathryn McGarry, Norm Miller
Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns
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